

**Vancouver Board of Education**

**Annual  
Literacy Plan**

**July 2013**

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## Vancouver District Literacy Plan

### Introduction

Boards of Education are mandated, on or before July 15 of a school year, to submit a district literacy plan to the Ministry of Education. The district literacy plans represent the literacy work happening in communities within the geographic boundary of the school district.

This submission 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 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>

The purpose of the Vancouver District Literacy Plan is to provide an update on the work and goals outlined in the 2012 Literacy Plan. It continues to be a summary of the collaborative work of the community literacy partners and a blue print for future action. The plan reflects the ongoing energy and commitment of all the partners who are working together to improve the lives of people working and living in communities throughout Vancouver.

For the purposes of the plan, a definition of literacy that has been agreed upon by Literacy Now and ReadNow and that aligns with the VBE Core Purpose is being employed. Literacy is defined as "the broad set of skills that enable people to participate more fully in social, economic, family and community (ReadNow BC Literacy Planning Guide).

This report 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

According to the latest census data (2011) Vancouver continues to grow. There are some significant shifts in the population. For example, the percentage of the population represented by children under 15 dropped from 15% to 13%. At the same time, the percentage of seniors increased from 16% to 18%.

- The City of Vancouver grew since the last census in 2006 from 578, 141 to 603, 502
- Over 40% of the growth took place in the Downtown Peninsula, which had just under 100,000 residents in May 2011. The City of Vancouver represents 26% of the Metro Vancouver population of 2.3 million people, on 4% of the region's land base
- Metro Vancouver had the second highest population growth among Metropolitan areas in Canada, following Toronto which added 470,000 residents – from 5,113,149 in 2006 to 5,583,064 in 2011. However, Metro Vancouver remains the third largest Metropolitan area, following Montreal's 2011 population of 3,824, 221.
- The Province of BC population increased by 286,570, from 4,113,487 in 2006 to 4,400,057 in 2011. Metro Vancouver absorbed about 69% of the provincial growth, resulting in Metro's share of BC total population increasing from 51.5% to 52.5%.

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

- Within Metro Vancouver, Surrey absorbed 73,275 additional residents, about 37% of Metro growth. The City of Vancouver took the second largest share with 25,461 additional residents, about 13% of the population growth.
- Metro Vancouver's average household size increased from 2.56 to 2.60 over the past 5 years, reversing a trend of decreasing average household size seen over past Census periods.

The City of Vancouver identifies 23 distinct neighbourhoods that make up Vancouver (City of Vancouver Planning Department). The chart below shows the population of each and changes from the 2006 to the 2011 census.

<b>Neighbourhood</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>
Arbutus-Ridge	16,144	<b>15,908</b>
Downtown	43,417	<b>54,690</b>
Dunbar-Southlands	21,478	<b>21,754</b>
Fairview	29,294	<b>31,432</b>
Grandview-Woodland	28,206	<b>27,297</b>
Hastings-Sunrise	33,127	<b>33,992</b>
Kensington-Cedar Cottage	44,664	<b>47,471</b>
Kerrisdale	14,618	<b>14,732</b>
Killarney	27,178	<b>28,458</b>
Kitsilano	40,597	<b>41,371</b>
Marpole	23,783	<b>23,832</b>
Mount Pleasant	23,616	<b>26,400</b>
Oakridge	12,726	<b>12,443</b>
Renfrew-Collingwood	48,885	<b>50,495</b>
Riley Park	21,815	<b>21,794</b>
Shaughnessy	8,896	<b>8,807</b>
South Cambie	7,070	<b>7,682</b>
Strathcona	11,925	<b>12,170</b>
Sunset	35,231	<b>36,286</b>
Victoria-Fraserview	29,196	<b>30,711</b>
West End	44,556	<b>44,543</b>
West Point Grey	12,990	<b>12,803</b>

The City of Vancouver has a large multicultural population and growth in the city is largely due to immigration. The city 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.

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.

According to Decoda Literacy Solutions (formerly Legacies Now and Literacy BC) , immigrants with 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 Community Literacy Planning Overview**

Each of Vancouver's neighbourhoods is unique in its history, culture and population and each has developed resources and planning processes to meet the needs within their community and to respond to the varied and significant changes. This has implications for literacy planning. A Vancouver Literacy Plan is a compilation of neighbourhood literacy plans.

All of the neighbourhoods share similar challenges. High immigration, increasing numbers of seniors, the isolation of families and residents due to multiple barriers of language, poverty, and access to transportation, housing, child care, information, and the provision of appropriate services are issues that all communities face.

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 some cohesion to literacy planning across the City, and this resulted in 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.*

There have been staff changes at both the VSB and several of the neighbourhoods during the 2012-13 school year, and as a result this work has not moved ahead in an intentional manner this year. The discussions from the visioning session (below) will form the basis for the Committee's focus in the coming year:

- Developing a common vision and framework to underlie and support the neighbourhood work in the future
- Identifying ways to sustain the local neighbourhood literacy community development work through shared learning, joint city-wide infrastructures, and sustainable on-going funding
- Clarifying what is actually expected (and can be reasonably expected) of local literacy coordinators, task groups, and host agencies
- Exploring what needs to be done city-wide, and by whom and how, to support the local neighbourhood literacy work
- Identifying ways to pay attention to the literacy and learning interests of children and youth, as well as the interests of adults
- Identifying ways to work with special groups of people who need more particular attention in addressing literacy and learning needs and barriers

## Common Approaches, Challenges, and Principles/Beliefs at the Neighbourhood Level

	Literacy Plan Complete	Age Group Focus <sup>2</sup>	Resource Guide Complete	Community Development Approach	Special Target Groups
DTES	Yes	Mostly Adults	Yes	Yes	Aboriginals People with learning differences People with addictions
Hastings Sunrise	Yes	Adults	In progress	Yes	Families
Kensington Cedar Cottage	Yes	Adults		Yes	Newcomers Seniors Families
Kitsilano Westside	Yes	Adults	Yes	Yes	Newcomers
Marpole	Yes	0 – Grade 3 Adults Starting Youth	In progress	Yes	Aboriginals Newcomers
Renfrew Collingwood	Yes	Adults	Yes	Yes	Newcomers Seniors
Mount Pleasant	Yes	Adults		Yes	
South Van	Yes	Adults		Yes	Newcomers

### Common Approaches

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, at least initially, on the literacy and learning interests and needs of adults.
- Most groups now have a completed local literacy plan.
- 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 a common theme.

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

<sup>2</sup> Three age groups have been suggested: birth to grade 3, grades 4 to 12, and adulthood. The grade 3 divide makes some sense because the experience in schools is that if children do not learn to read by then they will likely face continuing and widening learning and literacy development challenges.

- 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 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.

## Common Challenges

The following common challenges have been identified:

- Lack of information among adult learners about the literacy and learning resources that already exist, how to access and use them, and how to give them feedback<sup>3</sup>
- Lack of on-going sustainable funding to carry the local literacy work forward, and to support the salaries and work of local literacy coordinators
- Lack of clarity about the expectations (e.g. from Decoda Literacy Solutions) about the roles and outcomes of the work of literacy coordinators, host agencies, and community task groups
- Lack of connections to city-wide service delivery agencies that work closely with some of the identified target populations (e.g. newcomers and Aboriginal people)<sup>4</sup>
- Role confusion among the local literacy coordinators<sup>5</sup>
- Role confusion among the neighbourhood task groups once the local literacy plan has been developed
- Lack of a common message that explains the "literacy focus and agenda" and provides the rationale for making literacy and learning a priority<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In a number of communities, this has led to the development of resource guides.

<sup>4</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>5</sup> This confusion is lessening as the local literacy coordinators meet together more often, and focus on their joint work and understandings.

<sup>6</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.

- Role confusion arising among the local neighbourhood task groups when they are given responsibilities for allocating funds (e.g. Raise a Reader funds)
- 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
- Lack of community spaces to expand existing local programs

## **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>7</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>8</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

It is important that the local literacy community development work be able to demonstrate influence and positive change both locally and city-wide.

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<sup>7</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>8</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.

## 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
- 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:

- Develop a joint job description for local literacy coordinators that can be used by all of the local neighbourhoods and host agencies<sup>9</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.

## 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.

### Vancouver Literacy Planning Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhood	Steward	LOC
Downtown Eastside Literacy Roundtable	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:nkinglewatt@cedarcottage.org">nkinglewatt@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**

Project Steward: WISH Drop-In Centre Society

Literacy Outreach Coordinator: William Booth

Current Stage: Second year of implementation completed in April 2013

### **Reflections on the current year**

#### **Literacy Task Group**

During the past year, the literacy task group in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) community has been comprised of over 30 adult educators who sit on the DTES Adult Literacy<sup>10</sup> Roundtable and represent a wide spectrum of literacy/educational organizations in the DTES community. These organizations (in alphabetical order) are:

Aboriginal Front Door Society; AIDS Vancouver; Capilano University Community Development and Outreach Department; Carnegie Learning Centre; Carnegie Library; Children Need Care Now-Community Action Program for Children; Downtown Community Court; Downtown East Education Centre (VSB); First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council; First United Church; Frontier College; Harbour Light Learning Centre; Joint Effort; Neighbourhood Care International; newSTART; Strathcona Community Centre; SFU Community Education Program; SFU Faculty of Education; The LivingRoom; UBC Humanities 101 Community Programme; UBC Learning Exchange; Union Gospel Mission Hope Learning Centre; Vancouver Community College; Vancouver Eastside Educational Enrichment Society; Vancouver Native Health Society; Vancouver Public Library; Vancouver Writing Exchange; WISH Drop-In Centre Society; YWCA Crabtree Corner; YWCA Metro Vancouver.

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 they are self-organized and have been coming together since 2006 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 as well offer opportunities for professional development and support through workshops and guest speakers.

The Roundtable engaged a new Literacy Outreach Coordinator in 2013 to build on the success and priorities of the community and previous Coordinator.

#### **Community Context**

The Downtown Eastside is a dynamic, vibrant, low-income Vancouver neighbourhood 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 neighbourhood prides itself on insider

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<sup>10</sup> Literacy on Downtown Eastside community goes far beyond reading and writing; rather, literacy means being able to enjoy and participate in everyday life.

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.
- In the face of ever increasing funding challenges Literacy Roundtable members and supporters continue to offer and provide innovative and creative programs.
- New housing stocks are becoming available (e.g. Portland Hotel Society, Rain City Housing, Union Gospel Mission, etc.) which are providing appropriate living conditions as well as new learning and skill training opportunities for a cross-section of the population.
- Despite relocation to other parts of the city to find affordable housing, many of 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 number and enthusiasm of volunteers and students who support various literacy projects remains high. Various innovative approaches are used to support and show appreciation for these contributions.
- 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. They also limit ability to create sustainable programs and community.
- Budget cuts from Ministry of Education, Ministry of Adult Education and Raise-a-Reader are impacting and cutting 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 government grant (CALP) that Capilano University has had in partnership with Carnegie Community Centre and WISH Drop-In Centre Society for many years is again being reduced.
- 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.
- The decision of the BC government to move to a centralized model of employment services (Work BC) has led to new challenges for 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 of the welfare office 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 have met with Vancouver City Managers to provide input in DTES Local Area Planning Process
- Literacy Roundtable members and supporters joined efforts to protest and lobby against Provincial Government cut-backs in support of literacy activities across the province.
- Literacy Roundtable members attended an event hosted by Vancouver Community College Board to community members to participate in a public forum on ways to increase support to the DTES community.
- Vancouver Community College's partners with the Lookout Society to provide a literacy and numeracy learning centre
- Continuing opportunities for computer literacy training at UBC Learning Exchange provides opportunities for trained facilitators from the program to support other community members/organizations in accessing computers
- Continuing collaboration between Capilano University, Carnegie Community Centre, and WISH Drop-In Centre Society
- Collaboration between SFU's Community Education Program and Megaphone (a magazine sold on the streets by homeless and low-income vendors).
- SFU's Community Capacity Building Certificate program which partnered with six community collaborators has provided graduates with skills to gainfully engage in activities which support and serve various community organizations and activities.
- The Roundtable has partnered with the Aboriginal Front Door Society in developing and delivering the First Nations Languages Sharing Circle.
- The DTES Professional Development Workshop Series which had involved volunteer tutors in workshops culminated in 2013 with the first-ever DTES Volunteer/Tutor Conference "Sharing and Supporting Ideas on Adult Learning in Our Community."
- The conference brought together an exciting blend of volunteer tutors, facilitators, and educators--all working with adult learners across the community. The 60 participants represented over 20 different community organizations involved in literacy and learning initiatives.

## **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."

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 Coordinators, working in conjunction with the DTES Adult Literacy Roundtable, have 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.

Literacy Goal	Action Taken	Indicators of Success	Challenges
<p><b>Connect, Exchange Skills and Share Ideas</b></p>	<p>Continued monthly Roundtable meetings</p> <p>Roundtable website includes current information on events &amp; programs</p> <p>Launched 'Round DTES Literacy Life' newsletter</p> <p>Continue collaboration with Secondary Education and community partners</p> <p>Collaboration with City of Vancouver to produce LAPP</p> <p>Collaboration with FSGV and their literacy and numeracy resources</p> <p>Collaboration &amp; communication &amp; networking with other Vancouver LOCs, Strathcona, Capilano Library Friday ESL</p>	<p>Roundtable membership increased; lively participation</p> <p>Website viewer numbers monitored.</p> <p>Stories written collaboratively with community members and groups; stories appear as URL links on website to facilitate sharing</p> <p>Funding secured from Rotary Club to finance Volunteer/Tutor Facilitator Conference.</p> <p>Provided Literacy Plan to City planners and other committee members.</p> <p>Number of collaborations and partnerships</p> <p>Attend city wide meetings when possible</p>	<p>Members finding the time to attend meetings</p> <p>Continued maintenance of website &amp; newsletter as possible given restricted hours of LOC due to funding cuts</p>
<p><b>Support/ Revitalize Aboriginal Languages and Cultural Practices</b></p>	<p>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</p> <p>Raise-a-Reader funds also allocated the</p>	<p>Facilitated by the same 2 Elders since it started in Sept. 2011; average attendance of 8 to 10 people; First Nations participants have shared that it's a safe place for them to remember and share their language</p> <p>Program continues to be supported by the Raise a</p>	<p>Identifying &amp; attracting additional resources &amp; strengthen collaboration</p>

	<p>'Books, Bags &amp; Babies' at YWCA Crabtree Corner; through crafts, storytelling, and drumming, program provides First Nations family with a connection to their culture in a positive learning environment</p> <p>Collaboration with VCC Aboriginal Programs</p>	Reader funds	
<p><b>Fund Low Income Resident Teaching and Learning Opportunities</b></p>	<p>Support hourly living wages paid to community members for their work when possible</p> <p>Elders leading the First Nations Languages Sharing Circle</p> <p>Assistant Coordinator of the First Nations Languages Sharing Circle</p> <p>RaR grant for Bosman Library</p>	<p>Support to employment opportunities</p> <p>Books and hours provided by volunteers</p>	<p>Many opportunities to employ people from the community, but funding remains limited</p> <p>Uncertainty as to future of Centre</p>
<p><b>Increase Awareness of Literacy Resources</b></p>	<p>Update &amp; Distribution of over 1600 copies of the "Literacy, Learning, Training and Education Services in the DTES" quick reference guide through the Carnegie Newsletter &amp; at various community events</p> <p>Complete reports such as DLP, RaR, edudata</p>	<p>VPL &amp; Volunteer involvement and support</p> <p>Community members and organizations have repeatedly requested additional copies</p> <p>Reports submitted</p>	<p>Integrating visual symbols</p> <p>Providing on-line access</p>
<p><b>Build Capacity to Support People with Learning Disabilities / Differences</b></p>	<p>Roundtable will continue to support cross-cultural opportunities and professional development when possible</p>	<p>Continued discussion at monthly meetings</p> <p>Feedback indicates that continued support is desired and needed</p> <p>Meeting with Evelyn Saler Centre</p>	<p>Coordinating available spaces</p> <p>Identifying appropriate resources</p>

<b>Create Momentum through Neighbourhood learning Themes and Events</b>	Foster momentum and keep members & supporters informed through DTES Professional Development opportunities  Continue to support graduates of SFU's Community Capacity Building Certificate and others to strengthen, empower and promote Individuals from DTES	Involvement & participation in events such as Alley Health Fair, Heart of City, Creation and Implementation of Educational Fair, Writer's Jamboree, etc.	On-going resource & time limitations
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### Goals and Priorities for the Coming Year

Given the limitations on planning and reporting time due to personnel changes, thinking about the upcoming year (July 2013 to June 2014), the DTES Adult Literacy Roundtable has been able to identify and will continue to develop opportunities, issues, and challenges in the Downtown Eastside community, particularly pertaining to strengthening literacy and learning.

#### Opportunities:

- To continue the momentum of DTES Professional Development and coordinate, if possible, a learners/volunteer tutor conference, with a possible theme of "What is working for you to support your learning?"
- To remain involved and strengthen development of additional literacy opportunities to the ever growing population of children, youth and seniors in the DTES as discussed during past community consultations
- To support writing and submission of joint grant proposals to foundations and other possible funders who favour applicants in partnerships
- Assist informing the newly elected provincial government, new ministers, Local Area Planning Process and other opportunities as they become available, of importance to ongoing support for literacy as defined by A Plan for Strengthening Literacy on DTES

#### Issues:

- Continue to raise the profile of literacy and embed its importance across the community. Asking the question: "Where does literacy fit into the big picture?"

#### Challenges:

- Ongoing changes (re-zoning and re-development) in the DTES neighbourhood will continue to impact learners and volunteer tutors
- Changes in funding structures continue to make creating sustainable programs difficult

In response to these opportunities, issues, and challenges, the goals for strengthening literacy in the DTES community during the upcoming year are highlighted in the following diagram. They also include a continuation of the literacy goals identified in the original literacy plan (October 2010). Working together and self-determination will continue to be the overarching priorities.



A general plan for how these literacy goals will be addressed in the upcoming year—and why they should be addressed—is outlined below. The people involved in actualizing them are the DTES Adult Literacy Roundtable members and supporters, First Nations Elders, volunteer tutors, learners, artists, other service providers, and the Literacy Outreach Coordinator as a central coordinating point.

It should be noted that the monthly meetings provide the opportunity for members to identify new opportunities, adjust planning as necessary, and for rapid response to available opportunities.

1) *Connect, Share Ideas, Exchange Skills, and Collaborate*

**Why:** Working together can create more opportunities for peer/colleague support, professional development, and creating new cross-organization initiatives to better support literacy and learning in the community.

**Action:** Attend Provincial Literacy Conference. Continue and expand the invitation for other groups to join the DTES Adult Literacy Roundtable. As viable, continue to share information about programs and events in the community through the 'Round DTES Literacy Life newsletter and Roundtable website. Possibly, establish an 'Idea Bank' on the Roundtable website where people can share their ideas for future projects, programs, and initiatives.

**Resources:** Already have an extensive supporters contact list, and the website and newsletter are up and running. Will need guidance on how best to set up digital 'Idea Bank' and promote it throughout the community.

## 2) *Increase Awareness of Literacy Resources*

**Why:** To ensure that learners of any literacy level, volunteer tutors, educators, and service providers in the community are aware of the many opportunities available around literacy and learning. This awareness will facilitate the self-advocacy of learners, improve referrals between organizations, and encourage potential collaborations and pooling of resources.

**Action:** Update the "Literacy, Learning, Training and Education Services in the DTES" quick reference guide. As opportunities become available, hire community artist to produce a poster communicating the same information, but in mainly a visual format that can be widely distributed. Continue to publish the 'Round DTES Literacy Life newsletter highlighting literacy programs, collaborations, and issues in the community. Hire social media artists from the community to produce videos featuring various literacy programs/resources which can be posted on the Roundtable website.

**Resources:** Already have an established quick reference guide, website, and newsletter to build on. Additional funding will be required to hire artists to create visual poster and media videos.

## 3) *Advocacy*

**Why:** Create awareness of challenges to access and continue education (literacy) given the range of cuts and array of new policies that challenge access to resources.

**Action:** Continue to be vocal with the government, policy makers, and educational institutions about the impact of funding cuts. Share this literacy plan widely.

**Resources:** Already have extensive contact list and Roundtable meeting as a forum for sharing new information and for planning steps in terms of advocacy.

## 4) *Increase Engagement with Non-Profit Service Providers & Community Councils*

**Why:** To raise profile and importance of literacy across the community. Increasing engagement with these groups will also provide more insight into where they see potential opportunities, issues and challenges.

**Action:** Through outreach work, connect with organizations in the community and inquire as to what support is required in terms of literacy, education or training. Engage volunteers from the community to participate in the project. Actively invite service providers to attend the DTES Adult Literacy Roundtable meetings. Asking the question of "Where does literacy fit into the big picture?" at community council meetings.

**Resources:** Already have extensive network through Roundtable members and supporters contact lists, as well as the "Literacy, Learning, Training and Education Services in the DTES" quick reference guide. Need volunteers from the community to help in the outreach work.

#### 5) *Explore How to Support Literacy Opportunities for Youth, Seniors, and Families*

**Why:** The focus of the DTES Adult Literacy Roundtable is primarily on Adult Education. However, discussions at Roundtable meetings continue to indicate that additional literacy support and encouragement is needed by youth, seniors, and families in the DTES community.

**Actions:** Through outreach work, connect with organizations in the community that work with youth, seniors, and families, to inquire if they require more support around literacy, education and training. Invite organizations involved with youth, seniors and families to attend a consultation/brainstorming event.

**Resources:** Already have extensive network through Roundtable members and supporters lists. Need to identify appropriate spaces to host community meetings.

#### 6) *Support Revitalization of Aboriginal Languages and Cultural Practices*

**Why:** Many residents, during community consultations, continue to stress the importance and need to teach and learn more about Aboriginal languages and cultural practices. It is integral to Aboriginal rights, reviving Aboriginal languages, and healing the residential school legacy.

**Action:** As possible support the First Nations Languages Sharing Circle at the Aboriginal Front Door. Make further connections with other Aboriginal programming in the community such as the First Nations Journey class at the Carnegie Learning Centre and the 'Books, Bags & Babies' program at YWCA Crabtree Corner. Host meeting with groups (and other organizations with an Aboriginal focus) to discuss potential collaborations. Support joint funding application writing for further funding.

**Resources:** Already have collaborations with the Carnegie Learning Centre, YWCA Crabtree, and the Aboriginal Front Door Society. Will need to identify space to host community meeting. The First Nations Languages Sharing Circle will also require more funding in the future to pay for the work of the Elders and Assistant Coordinator.

#### 7) *Expand Support for Learners through Community-Wide Professional Development*

**Why:** Feedback indicates that events similar to past workshops such as DTES Professional Development are desired and needed in the future.

**Action:** Apply for funding to host similar opportunities, and to hire event coordinators from the community. Bring together a steering committee comprised of volunteer tutors and educators to plan for a community-wide volunteer tutor conference. This same committee could also plan for other activities & workshops.

**Resources:** Already have momentum, interest and contact list created by previous workshops. Will need to secure funding and identify locations appropriate to host the committee meetings, conference, and professional development workshops.

#### 8) *Fund Low-Income Resident Teaching and Learning Opportunities*

**Why:** To recognize and when possible share resources with the many skilled and talented residents in the DTES who want to teach and learn, but are under-funded.

**Action:** Facilitate partnerships between community organizations and support collaborative funding proposals which include funds for hiring community members. Provide mentorship and training to community members who are hired.

**Resources:** Already have people in the Downtown Eastside community who are eager and able to teach and learn. Will need funds to support low-income resident learning/teaching opportunities, as well as provide the training, space, and tools which they will require to do their work.

### Reflections on the current year

#### Literacy Task Group

##### Who takes part in the task group?

Hastings North Literacy Steering Committee members for 2012-2013 are Sandy Dowling of Kiwassa-Vancouver School Board Adult Education Program, Lynne Kennedy of Templeton High School, Angela Haaf and Susan Watson of Vancouver Public Library-Hastings Branch, Lucy Alderson of Carnegie Learning Centre and Capilano University, Melissa Cailleaux, Nancy McRitchie and Sophia Montero of Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, Deena Kotak of Tillicum Community Annex, Beth Beeching of Relevant Education of Adult Learners (REAL) of Capilano University as well as interns and community members Jennifer Boundy and Sana Alam.

##### How is the work of this group organized?

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 met eight times this year. The coordinator also engaged the committee members through many emails, phone calls and conversations each month to keep the committee on track with tasks, and moving the plan forward.

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
- Formulate the job description and hiring of the Literacy Outreach Coordinator.
- Provide direction to the Literacy Outreach Coordinator
- Provide approval of significant changes to literacy implementation plan

#### Community Context

##### *Opportunities and Challenges in Literacy and Learning in Hastings North*

Our diverse and vibrant 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 learning new skills.

Community members are involved in many different learning activities through a great variety of activities including skill development workshops ( life skills, employment skills, parenting, computer programs) community special events and celebrations, English as a Second Language (ESL), fitness and recreation, library use and reading, as well as food-oriented programs.

Our community has many 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 Hastings North are good at working together to offer learning programs that are barrier free. Some of these programs are open to the general public while others are tailored to specific needs.

Many of the learning programs are created for intercultural and intergenerational groups and settings. In other words, programs make sure to invite people from different cultures and they also welcome grandparents to grandchildren. 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.

### **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. This year, with the finalization and implementation of the Literacy Plan, the focus has been on maintaining the existing connections and branching out with more literacy focused awareness initiatives and programming.

The completion of Hastings North Literacy Plan was the culmination of a very comprehensive and collaborative process of gathering input, feedback and vision from community members and stakeholders. Securing the completed literacy plan on the Kiwassa Neighbourhood website provides information, guidance and clarity regarding literacy in our community. This living document is easy to access, understand and will change as community services evolve to meet the changing needs and demographics of the neighbourhood.

One specific example of our collaborative process was how we identified the need for more clarity regarding the distribution of the Raise a Reader literacy funds and brainstormed and developed the following criteria or guiding principles for selecting the family literacy initiatives.

- **Neighbourhood based:** Organizations within our neighbourhood geographic boundary that have family literacy services and programs or would like to start one will be encouraged to apply and we will send out advance notices to relevant organizations. Organizations outside our neighbourhood are not eligible to participate.
- **Flexibility:** Programs and activities have to meet two or more of the family literacy pillars but they may not necessarily need to fulfill all of them to get the funding.
- **Consistency:** pilot projects initiated in previous years and have shown great success need to continue for long lasting impacts and to better capture best practices.
- **Creativity:** pilot projects that explore new ideas will get support to foster innovation and knowledge development in family literacy.
- **Partnership Building:** organizations that collaborate and deliver activities and services together by sharing resources will get funding support.

The financial support that came from the Raise the Reader funds helped us to strengthen our collaborations with two existing and established family literacy programs and to assist with the implementation of one new family literacy initiative.

- three six week family literacy 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 expanded the roles of their Parent Leaders to serve as leadership, literacy and parenting 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 a variety of aboriginal songs and drumming patterns.

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

*Complete and further share the Hastings Literacy Plan.* We completed the final draft of the Hastings Literacy Plan and distributed it to community partner organizations and residents. The plan is also available for public access on the Kiwassa Neighbourhood House website.

*Sustain Hastings North Literacy Planning Table:* The terms of reference for the roundtable and job description of the outreach worker are finalized; and the committee is expected to meet for 6 planning sessions in the upcoming year.

*Developing a literacy web site:* The brainstorming and discussions about the web site have been happening with the roundtable for several months. Prior to any final decisions, we require more detailed planning around how to organize resources in such a way that they are easily accessible for both service providers and community members.

*Strengthening the capacity and networks of service providers.* We held a successful and well-attended networking event in November 2012 at the Vancouver Public Library Hastings Branch. Additional workshops planned for the spring were postponed due to staffing changes and workloads. Planning is underway for additional networking events in the fall 2013 and spring 2014.

*Strengthen the literacy capacity of community members.* A book kiosk was built by at the May McLean housing complex and initiated and coordinated by a volunteer community member. The implementation of additional kiosks was delayed but several suitable location sites have been identified.

### **Indications of Success and Challenges:**

The passion and commitment within the round table group has helped to form a solid base for a strength-based visioning process directed towards literacy awareness and diverse learning opportunities. Involvement in the literacy task group has been an ongoing learning experience for all the members and the opportunity to share experiences, ideas and resources reflected the approach within literacy programming: valuing all participants' contributions and skills.

As previously identified through the development of the community literacy plan, the North Hastings task group continued to recognize and 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:

- Home based literacy activities
- 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

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

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

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 strive to create a more cohesive literacy focused network for all stakeholders to share best practices, experiences, resources and training opportunities.

The increasing high living cost and growing disparity of income in our neighbourhood and the city is marginalizing and displacing people with low incomes and creating barriers for new community members who want to participate in learning and literacy programs.

Direct program delivery was impacted when the Raise a Reader family literacy funding allocations were distributed very late in the school year and this caused some confusion from the service providers and financial stewards.

Finally, there was turnover in the Hastings North Literacy Outreach Coordinator position this year and therefore time required for hiring a new coordinator and providing orientation to the initiative and relationship building with committee members and partners. This has gone smoothly.

### **Goals and Action Plans for the Coming Year**

The overall purpose and goals of the Hastings North Literacy round table initiative is 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. Based on the action plans that commenced in April 2012, our group reviewed and refined our goals for the 2013-2014 year.

- a) *Strengthen the capacity of network services providers*  
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.

- b) *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.
- c) *Build community capacity and volunteer opportunities*  
Organize two workshops related to understanding learning styles and challenges, mental health, communication skills and financial literacy and develop three more book exchange kiosks in Hastings North neighbourhood locations.
- d) *Maintain and enhance community partnerships*  
Participate in Vancouver and regional meetings of literacy coordinators and organizations and continue to consult, communicate and liaison with Decoda Literacy Solutions.
- e) *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.

We plan to meet our goals through the 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 recently formalized job description and the round table committee members. Additional community educators, facilitators and consultants will be accessed and hired to deliver specific workshops.

## **Reflections on the current year**

### **Literacy Task Group**

The Kensington-Cedar Cottage literacy task group is made up of residents and organizational representatives from the local community. These include:

#### *Organizations:*

- Donna Chang, Steward and Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House Executive Director
- Marion Broadbent, Laura Secord Elementary Principal
- Naomi Klingle-Watt, Literacy Outreach Coordinator
- Kim Whaley, Lord Selkirk Elementary Community Assistant
- Sarah Maitland, Kidsafe Writer's Room Coordinator
- Yukiko Tosa, Kensington Public Library Branch Head

#### *Residents:*

- Bridget Rivers-Moore, Resident and English Conversation Group volunteer facilitator
- Heather Legal, Resident and Tecumseh Annex Elementary PAC Chair
- Pedro Su, Resident and Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House Board member
- Penelope Bascolovi, Resident
- Linda Stanfield, Resident

The implementation task group formed in September 2011, including four members who remained from the planning task group. From September 2011 to February 2012, the group met monthly to work on implementing the goals of the literacy plan. In November, the task group also worked together to decide how to use the Raise A Reader funds. From February 2012 onwards, the group decided to meet every two months, using the time to share updates as well as evaluate the planned activities in order to provide guidance and ensure they were embodying shared values.

### **Community Context**

The Kensington-Cedar Cottage community continues to grow. In 2011, the EDI Report indicated that our community had the highest number of young children in Vancouver. With this growth in the number of residents, our community is also experiencing new real estate developments. The Kingsway transportation corridor has been identified as a place for increased density in our neighbourhood. What was once a street of "mom-and-pop" shops and restaurants will likely become a sea of high rises and new business developments.

Two notable neighbourhood changes are:

- A planned development to move the Immigrant Services Society into our neighbourhood with the building of a new Refugee Centre. This will be the first of its kind in North America and will become a hub of services to include housing and a health centre for refugee people.
- The naming of part of our community as "Little Saigon" to commemorate the Vietnamese businesses on Kingsway marks a celebration of the success of Vietnamese people in our community.

These community changes have not threatened the ability of organizations to support literacy development. The greatest threat to the ability of organizations is the lack of resources to participate in the planning and implementation of literacy activities. All of the organizations who participate do so because of their commitment to support literacy development and to work collaboratively to share the importance of learning.

### **Community Development and Literacy Collaborations**

This past year, we focused on exploring partnerships for collaborative projects. Meetings have been held to explore the following partnerships:

- Laura Secord Elementary (LS) and Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House (CCNH): to support two community potluck/skill exchanges in April and June 2012 held at the school. These community potlucks included the efforts of the LS Principal, administrative staff, students, PAC members, and the CCNH out-of-school-care Coordinator at LS. This collaboration included a vibrant parent committee who worked to plan and host these potlucks. Further, this partnership has generated long-term connections between families, students, and CCNH for future projects and events
- School Based Hubs: Continued work with Laura Secord Elementary (staff and parents) to explore Seniors Tea, Family Literacy, Child Care developments
- Repair Café Initiative: Meetings with the Tool Library and SPEC on material literacy
- Seniors and Literacy: Collaboration with the Vancouver Public Library and CCNH to host a dialogue about Seniors and Literacy
- At the end of the school year in 2012, all of the LOCs in Vancouver met with the Vancouver School staff and the Vancouver Public Library staff to work with a facilitator on the development of a Vancouver Literacy and Planning document. The collaboration between the LOCs, the Vancouver School Board and the Vancouver Public Library is significant in supporting literacy in Vancouver
- Physical Literacy: Collaboration with Trout Lake Community Centre, Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House, Boat Daycare Society, and Brant Villa Daycare Society on a community centre-based physical literacy project

Essential ongoing collaborations include:

- Vancouver Public Library (Kensington Public Library)
- Vancouver School Board (Laura Secord Elementary)
- Vancouver Parks Board (Trout Lake Community Centre)
- Developing collaborations with settlement agencies and post-secondary institutions

There are a number of important ingredients to ensure that collaborations work well:

- Community “champions” who are willing to come forward and take the time to work with others on projects.
- A strong leader (either steward, LOC or partner) to have the commitment to the project and that others accept as the leader
- A shared vision which everyone can both contribute towards and gain from
- A shared commitment to the values of the literacy plans and collaboration

## **What priorities, goals or objectives have you addressed this year?**

2012 focussed on activities that strengthened our community relationships with the intention of deepening our understanding of literacy in our neighbourhoods. We continue to work on activities that focussed on the KCC Literacy Plan goals:

- *To make connections:* Literacy connections were made with VCC Basic Education Department, Literacy in the Environment Initiative, Tool Library and SPEC (material literacy), and Cedar Cottage Food Network
- *Nurture culture and languages:* Presentation and discussion on the Refugee Centre being built in our community; following through on book sales at the Kensington Public Library to purchase bilingual books
- *Celebrate:* Family Literacy Week Celebration
- *Increase social capital:* Shared stories on volunteer leadership (Writer's Exchange, Kensington Library, Secord Family Literacy)
- *Develop community hub:* Focus activities at Laura Secord Hub, Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House, and Trout Lake Community Centre
- A parent committee has developed at Laura Secord Elementary to guide family/community literacy initiatives. The committee decided to hold two community potlucks to invite families and neighbours to "share food, share ideas, share skills". Invitations not only went to all 600 students in the school but all neighbours within a three-block radius. Parents are to lead four workshops at the June 12 potluck showcasing and sharing their skills.
- SHARE night was launched in April 2012 and is running weekly. SHARE night is a collaborative effort of Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House staff to develop a group skills exchange model. Currently, there is a core group meeting for a resident-led English conversation group. There are also families who participate in family-art activities co-led by parents and staff.

Each of the achievements of the past year required the contributions of staff and volunteers from the partnering organizations. The LOC was instrumental in taking a leadership role to facilitate and organize most events.

## **What adjustments were made to the plan?**

The Kensington-Cedar Cottage Task Group was required to consider the limitations of funding. Through participation in a Vancouver Literacy Visioning and Planning Session, there was the opportunity to learn from other Vancouver LOCs and to identify the priority strategies and outcomes. As a result of the session, it was our plan this year to:

- Continue to engage organizations in the Task Group
- Develop a workplan to include the development of a resource guide and opportunities for the Task Group members to share knowledge and best practices
- Focus on understanding the literacy needs of newcomer families

## **How do you know that actions taken are working to support literacy?**

Our implemented activities began in April 2012, including the SHARE nights and Laura Secord Elementary community potlucks. Initial indications of success include:

- A parent committee has formed at Laura Secord Elementary, guiding the focus of ongoing community potlucks and sharing the planning, promoting and implementation of the events.
- A core group of women has formed an English Conversation group at Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House with a standout community volunteer facilitating the group each week. They've identified that they would like to learn knitting together from a local senior(s).
- Three isolated families have attended SHARE nights and identified skills they have that they would like to share as well as types of literacy they would like to develop. One resident is a single mother with three children who attends SHARE night regularly. She is an avid crafter who

would like to share her sewing skills. She enjoys the opportunity to connect with others, while learning and contributing in an inclusive environment.

- Shared stories of successes and challenges from Task Group partners  
Example: The changes and expansion of the Writer's Exchange to include more schools and students  
Example: A shared learning and discussion about the experience of refugee children in our schools
- Results: From these shared stories and discussion, a plan and vision were created to hold learning opportunities for both further discussion and information about the needs of refugee children in our community

### **What are the things that support literacy work?**

The Kensington Cedar Cottage Literacy Task Group have been essential in supporting literacy work. Through their shared vision and outreach in different areas of the community, they have been able to assess literacy needs of the community and work collaboratively to address these needs. Receiving Raise a Reader funding have enabled the Task Group to put some of their plans into action, including family literacy activities.

### **Challenges**

#### **What are the difficulties?**

A continuing challenge is the limitation of resources and time. While literacy can be an overarching concept, it competes with many other demands for organizations in the community. This can create difficulties when families, who have limited time, must choose between competing events or programming. Also, there is some vagueness about the expectation for the use of funds and/or the successes to be achieved.

Another continuing challenge is connecting with isolated and disconnected community members, especially those whose literacy skills prevent them from accessing traditional models of communication for programs and events (e.g. posters and other print-based information). We have had some successes in connecting with these disconnected members but we recognize that there is still more work that can be done.

#### **What would help?**

To ameliorate some of the difficulties we have experienced, it has been essential for us to effectively collaborate with other community organizations to find ways to further embed literacy into existing programs and to avoid duplicating programs. Also, by sharing information, resources, and experiences, we have strengthen the impact and reach of our programming overall. We are always continuing to look for opportunities to collaborate and partner with other community organizations.

Additionally, it would be helpful to find further ways for LOCs, stewards and task groups to share information, resources and experiences. Within members of the task group, it would be beneficial if there were more effective systems of sharing resources and information, such as volunteers and translators.

#### **For the coming year:**

#### **Are there new opportunities, challenges, or issues in your community?**

With new collaborations and different sources of funding, there will always be new opportunities, challenges and issues in our community. The changing demographics of our community will also

present changing needs and concerns. For the next year, we intend to respond to these new opportunities and challenges by ensuring that we are clear and realistic about what we can achieve in the allotted time and with the resources available.

### **What goals, priorities or objectives will you work on in the coming year?**

#### **Goal #1: Compile and Share Community Resources and Knowledge**

- Present and review the Vancouver Literacy Visioning and Planning Document to the Task Group for discussion and planning
- Complete the KCC Literacy Resource Guide and circulate
- Share successes of the Raise a Reader funds and projects
- Facilitate ways in which community members can access existing community resources and learn from each other

#### **Goal #2: Celebrate and Strengthen Community Partnerships and Collaborations**

- Maintain and continue to engage the Literacy Task Group
- Reach out to new partners to explore possible collaborations
- Continue to focus on ways to communicate across literacy barriers – through storytelling, visual narratives and clear, simple language

#### **Goal #3: Assess Changing Needs in our Community**

- Continue to maintain and create connections with community members
- Identify two learning opportunities to address literacy for newcomer families in our community

### **What will be required to meet the goals and effectively employ actions for the coming year?**

In order to effectively meet the goals and carry out the actions needed, we need to ensure that we have the continued partnerships and collaborations within and between the Task Group and other community organizations. These continued collaborations, combined with opportunities for open discussions and sharing of resources, will enable us to effectively assess and address the changing needs in our community. It will also lead to strengthened community partnerships and an opportunity to share knowledge. These continued partnerships, along with continued resources, will ensure that we can achieve our goals.

## **Vancouver's Westside (Kitsilano)**

### **Reflections on the current year:**

#### **Community Context**

In the past year, the Literacy Outreach Coordinator and Service Provider groups such as the Westside Newcomer's Hub have worked on the goals set in the Community Literacy Plan-  
<http://www.kitshouse.org/2010/05/06/kitswestside-literacy-plan/>.

Ongoing programming such as the Welcoming Neighbour Program (volunteer literacy orientation and English Conversation Circles) continues to address literacy needs across the Westside. In addition, the Westside Newcomers Hub, which was formed in September 2011, continues to work to address literacy and settlement needs of residents new to Canada. The Hub meets every 3 or 4 months to share information and develop strategies to support newcomers in the community. The group has also played

a critical role in advocating for the need for services on Vancouver’s Westside. In addition to the literacy work supporting Newcomers, a new public access computer station has been established at the Kits House Seniors Resource Centre and has been supported by volunteer tutors who work with seniors to increase their computer literacy.

### 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
Diane Ash	West Side Family Place -Executive Director	Literacy Task Force member 2009-2012
Daniela Esparo	Kitsilano Public Library- Area Manager	Literacy Task Force member 2009-2012
Kits Public Library Staff Member	Vancouver Public Library	Westside Newcomers Hub Member
Esaine Su, Audrie Leung & Jin Engen	Vancouver School Board- Settlement Workers in Schools	Westside Newcomers Hub Member
Nancy Olson/ Liza Wajong	Pacific Immigrant Resource Society	Westside Newcomers Hub Member
Luke Liang/ Helen Su/ Pinky Dang	SUCCESS	Westside Newcomers Hub Member
Susan Schachter	Little Mountain Neighbourhood House	Westside Newcomers Hub Member
Qiuning Wang/ Grant Hoyme	Old Barn Community Centre	Westside Newcomers Hub Member
Zsuzsi Fodor	Kitsilano Neighbourhood House	Westside Newcomers Hub Member
UBC Campus & Community Planning	Gabriella Scali	Westside Newcomers Hub Member
Daisy Au & Khim Tan	MOSAIC	Westside Newcomers Hub Member

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 and projects through collaboration.

### Community Development and Literacy Collaboration

- a. *What are the important collaborations that have taken place to support literacy and the work of the task group?*
  - The Old Barn Community Centre has partnered with a number of organizations and people to provide a variety of programs and workshops to support English language learning and

settlement support including Settlement Workers in Schools, SUCCESS & Vancouver Community college.

- The Old Barn Community Centre and Kitsilano Neighbourhood House have partnered to run a Multicultural Women's Support Program.
- Point Grey Community Church and the Kitsilano Public Library have both hosted English Conversation Circles. In addition, a pilot project 'Craft Conversation Circles' between Point Grey Community Church and Kits Neighbourhood House ran from Sept-December 2012 and supported the interaction of English Language Learners & native speakers in an informal and creative environment. They were also involved in an annual ECC celebration that brought together participants, volunteers and partners from all the circles.

*What are the essential ongoing collaborations?*

- The collaborations between Settlement & Language serving agencies and local organizations have been essential to meeting language learning and settlement needs of newcomers. The structure of the Westside Newcomers Hub has been a key catalyst for making connections and responding to emerging needs.

*What makes collaborations work well?*

Collaborations in literacy work well when there are mutual benefits to partners, openness, flexibility and on-going communication. A culture of collaboration with service providers is important in addition to the ability to address clearly defined needs. Funding for the Literacy Outreach Coordinator was an essential part of the success and the Outreach Coordinator facilitated the literacy task group and made connections between individuals and organizations.

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

*What priorities, goals or objectives have you addressed this 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.

Goal 4: To increase computer literacy among low-income residents and seniors by improving access to training and supports for computer literacy.

### **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 year, Kits House partnered with Point Grey Community Church & Kitsilano Public Library to run these circles. 4 new volunteers were trained this year and 4 volunteers returned from previous years. 2 of those volunteers also worked with volunteers at Point Grey Community Church to pilot 3 weeks of Craft Conversation Circles. This year staff and volunteers worked on refining the orientation

and training materials based on lessons learned since the beginning of the program. Volunteers supported each other through regular meetings and celebrations.

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

Programming continued to support English language learning, most notably, nine conversation circles were led by trained volunteers at Kitsilano Neighbourhood House. Other programming, such as the Multicultural Women’s Support Group, had an integrated English Language learning component.

9 English Conversation Circles  
33 English Language Learners in circles; 25 participants in Craft Conversation Circles.  
8 volunteers

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

A number of strategies were implemented this year to embed successful literacy programs into ongoing programs and develop leadership capacity of volunteers.

English Conversation Circle volunteers took a leadership role in training and mentoring new volunteers. More time was spent on developing relationships with organizations supporting the circles. There was also work to bridge English Conversation Circles to other opportunities such as Neighbourhood Small grants, volunteer placements and family programs.

In terms of collaboration with partners and awareness building, the following activities occurred this year.

- Continuation of the Westside Newcomers Hub
- Hosting of English Conversation Circles at Point Grey Community Church, Vancouver Public Library and Kitsilano Neighbourhood House.
- English Conversation Circles Celebration  
Starting of an ESL book club at Kitsilano Public Library

**Goal 4: To increase computer literacy among low-income residents and seniors by improving access to training and supports for computer literacy.**

Volunteers have been trained and supported in one-to-one computer tutoring placements at Kitsilano Neighbourhood House & the Kits House Seniors Resource Centre. A new computer station was integrated in the Kits House Seniors Resource Centre.

Vancouver Public Library’s 5 branches on the Westside continue to offer the majority of free public access computers in the community and offer group tutorials on a regular basis. Workshops covered topics such as basic computer skills, eBook basics & internet basics.

**Indications of Success**

*How do you know that actions taken are working to support literacy? What impact have the literacy initiatives had? It is important to include examples to illustrate the impact.*

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

Goal 1:

Success Statements: We will know we have been successful when –

1. A diverse group of residents are trained in community literacy needs and supports and are placed in meaningful volunteer activities.
2. A number of programs in the community are benefiting from the placement of literacy- focused volunteers.

Indicators of Success:

- We delivered a volunteer training session for 4 community members to gain skills in cultural inclusion, community literacy and language support for newcomers to the Westside
- Literacy-focused volunteers supported English Conversation Circles & Craft Conversation Circles.

Goal 2:

Success Statements: We will know we have been successful when –

1. More newcomer and immigrant organizations are connected to Westside community tables and service provider networks.
2. English Conversation Circles are developed and sustained over a period of two years and serve newcomer and immigrant populations in our community.
3. English Conversation Circles are supported by volunteers who have been trained in literacy.

Indicators of success:

- The following newcomer and immigrant organizations connected to the Westside Newcomers Hub this year: SUCCESS, Little Mountain Neighbourhood House- Settlement Services, Settlement Workers in Schools & MOSAIC.
- 9 volunteer-led English Conversation Circles (8-10 weeks duration) were delivered
- 4 sessions of Craft Conversation circles were conducted.
- 48 newcomer participants & volunteers involved in socials, conversation circles & training sessions

Goal 3:

Success Statements: We will know we have been successful when –

1. Service providers and residents are aware of literacy needs and can refer residents or themselves to appropriate services.
2. A sustainability plan is developed for literacy on the Westside including funding sources, volunteer capacities and service provider networks.

Indicators of Success:

- Continuation of a Westside-wide online calendar for service providers of newcomer resources
- English Conversation Circle volunteers developed business cards and distributed them to potential participants and service providers across the Westside.
- Continuation of the Westside Newcomers Hub provides a space for service providers to share information and work collaboratively
- Sustainability plan has been developed by the Literacy Outreach Coordinator and is updated every 6 months

Goal 4:

Success Statements: We will know we have been successful when –

1. There is an increase in computer literacy programs and public access computers in our community.
2. Seniors and low-income residents feel that they can access affordable computer training.
3. Seniors and low-income residents feel they can access computers and the internet.

Indicator of Success

- New public access station established at the Kits House Seniors Resource Centre
- 2 volunteers support weekly free one-on-one computer tutorials.

Some narrative examples of the impact of the work this year are as follows:

*English Conversation Circle Host*

About a year ago, I started looking for a volunteer opportunity in my neighbourhood. Having worked for many years in administrative and managerial positions, during the course of which I served on many different committees, I was eager to find something where I could be more “hands on”. An ad posted by Kits House for volunteers to join their Welcoming Neighbours program caught my eye and I was most interested in the English Conversation Circles. I submitted my application, went through a screening interview and attended a training program for volunteers. Then I was let loose on the participants of an Advanced level ECC...

The small group (five or six participants) and the emphasis on conversation rather than a class made for a relaxed and fun environment – but with a serious purpose. People signed up for the ECC in order to improve their English skills so they could participate more fully in their community and sound and feel more “Canadian”. They came from different countries and had different experiences, but talking and sharing stories broke down barriers and highlighted similarities and common goals. Over the three 8-week sessions I led during this past year, participants were from Iran, China, Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Chile and Spain. Some individuals came to two sessions and some came to all three.

Our sessions were pretty unstructured and free-flow and the content was determined by the wishes/interests/questions of the participants. We didn’t always stay on topic but allowed the conversation to develop naturally, with lots of laughter and input from everyone. Our conversations covered a diverse range of issues, and included role playing to answer the phone or apply for a job, learning about each other’s country of origin, reviewing newspaper articles, discussing current events and talking about food, cooking and celebrations/festivals. At the request of the participants, I corrected them if they made a mistake, and used a flip chart for unfamiliar words and phrases.

We were invited to take part in a “Hands of Hope” project being undertaken at the church where the sessions were held. This involved making plaster casts of our hands, waiting a week for the casts to harden and then decorating them. Our plaster hands became part of an art show to raise funds for the church and the process of making them allowed people to showcase their creativity and talk about why they chose certain positions for their hands and decorated them a certain way. It was a way of sharing information about ourselves and participating in a community event.

I’ve often heard that people volunteer as much for themselves as for others, and my experience has reinforced this. It’s been my privilege to have met such interesting people and in a small way, help them to integrate into Canadian culture and community. While I might be the volunteer, they have given back to me in countless ways.

Given the recent Vancouver Foundation study on our connection – or lack of – to the community, any initiative that addresses feelings of isolation or aloneness felt by people, particularly newcomers, and brings them together for a common purpose (to improve their spoken English) must be seen as a benefit. My involvement with the ECCs has increased my sense of community and motivates me to be more aware of what is happening in my neighbourhood and the challenges faced by newcomers struggling to fit in and be accepted. I have loved the experience of facilitating the ECCs, cherish the friendships I have made, and look forward to continuing with the program.

I extend my thanks to Kits House for providing me with this opportunity, for their support, and for all their efforts to make Vancouver a more welcoming place for all of us.

“The Circle was good and useful. I liked meeting other people and I personally even made a friend.”-

*English Conversation Circle Participant.*

## **Supports**

This year the keys elements to support literacy work on the Westside were funding for coordination, commitment of the Westside Newcomer Hub and the contributions from volunteers.

## **Challenges**

The difficulties were finding time to coordinate collaborations and partnership with the limited hours of the literacy coordinator. A part-time position is funded and with limited hours it is hard to address the full spectrum of literacy needs & opportunities in the community.

There have also been staff changes of key individuals who have been involved with the Literacy plan since the beginning in 2009. It will be important for the Literacy Outreach Coordinator to bridge knowledge to new staff and organizations as they become involved.

*What would help?*

Continued funding at the provincial level for both neighbourhood and regional literacy coordination.

## **For the coming year**

*Are there new opportunities, challenges, or issues in your community? How will you respond to those?*

The newcomer population continues to grow on the Westside so we will continue to work on English language and community resource needs with this population. A key area of connection next year will be the Westside Newcomers Hub. There are also changes in settlement funding (responsibility moved from the Provincial government to the Federal government) in April 2014 (applications due July 2013) so the impacts of this change are unknown. One impact could be a gap in service for those who don't fit into the definition of eligible clients for the new funding.

*What goals, priorities or objectives will you work on in the coming year? What actions are planned against those goals?*

The following areas are priorities for the upcoming year:

- Expanding opportunities for public computer access and volunteer led tutorials
- Working with the Westside Newcomers Hub to collaborate across organizations and creatively respond to community needs. Especially to respond to impacts in funding changes.
- Strengthen community connections to continue to offer English Conversation Circles in a variety of locations and throughout the year.

*What will be required to meet the goals and effectively employ actions for the coming year?*

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
- Access to community spaces to expand public access computer sites
- Continued volunteer support

## Marpole

### Reflections on the current year

#### Literacy Task Group

- Historic Joy Kogawa House
- Literacy Outreach Coordinator for Marpole,
- Marpole Business Association (Marpole Online)
- Marpole Oakridge Community Centre
- Marpole Oakridge Family Place (steward of L.O.C position)
- Marpole Place Neighbourhood House
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S – Granville Street Office
- Vancouver Community College
- Vancity Credit Union - Marpole Community Branch
- Vancouver Public Library - Marpole Branch
- Vancouver School Board - Community Schools Coordinator for District 1

Working more frequently with the Literacy Outreach Coordinator this year were Pacific Immigrant and Refugee Services (PIRS) and Work BC Main Street satellite office.

How is the work of this group organized?

- The Marpole Literacy Task Group meets three times a year – in the Fall to plan for the year ahead and make budget and programming decisions, in February to share information, and in May or June to review the year.
- Task Group meetings in Marpole are led by the Literacy Outreach Coordinator who drafts an Agenda relating to work done and new proposed projects / directions. The Task Group gives input and approves any necessary expenditure. Implementation of agreed projects is the responsibility of the Literacy Outreach Coordinator.
- In addition to the three formal meetings there are various formal collaborations between the Literacy Outreach Coordinator and Task Group members during the year, with regard to specific events and programs. An example this year is the collaboration between Marpole Oakridge Family Place, the Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator and the Vancouver Public Library Marpole Branch to deliver two sets of workshops on E-Books and Apps.
- There are also informal discussions and information sharing which supports the work of the Literacy Outreach Coordinator and other partners.
- The Literacy Outreach Coordinator has created a Blog and a newsletter representing the members of the Task Group and all are free to use these tools for posting information in addition to their own outreach materials.
- The Literacy Outreach Coordinator goes out walking in the community once a month on behalf of literacy work and of the Task Group and visits various hubs such as the Vancouver Coastal Health Mental Health Team, Marpole Preschools and Elementary schools to promote literacy.
- The Literacy Outreach Coordinator regularly attends the South Vancouver Service Providers meeting and other local meetings relevant to Marpole to keep up with developments, network, and market literacy initiatives.
- The Literacy Outreach Coordinator has developed an advertising strategy customized for Marpole. A wide range of organisations working in and with Marpole are listed for outreach in terms of this strategy.

- The Literacy Outreach Coordinator has taken responsibility for bringing professional development and information to Task Group meetings, orienting the Task Group to the Community of Literacy Practice at Decoda and reminding them of resources such as the Kelty Mental Health Library, Decoda Library and the Family Support and Resource Centre at BC Children's Hospital. Relevant information from the Decoda Training of November 2012 has been shared with the Task Group.

## Community Context

What has happened in the community over the past year that impacts people and the ability of organizations to support literacy development? Consider both positive and negative impacts.

- The neighbourhood of Marpole stretches from Angus Drive to Ontario Street and from west 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the North Arm of the Fraser River.
- Marpole continues to change rapidly in terms of residential densification, business district growth and improved infrastructure. The Marpole Safeway redevelopment – a new 50 000 square foot Safeway store - is approaching completion. It is the only major grocery store in the area and a key business node. The area will see an extra 357 rental units close to the Safeway.
- The Cambie Corridor project also progressed at a steady pace with residential towers suitable for newcomer families, singles and students beginning to rise along with shopping, dining and entertainment facilities. These developments are situated beside the Canada Line station on Marine Drive, making them attractive options for people using transit. Literacy planners in Marpole will have to look ahead and plan for the needs of these new communities as they begin to arrive. It has been estimated that residents will be ready to move in to the area in 2015.
- Marpole business has been further strengthened by the renewal for the next seven years of the Marpole Business Association's mandate. The Marpole Business Association aims to enhance the Marpole commercial district to be pedestrian friendly and easy to navigate for living, shopping, work and leisure. Marpole is also being primed to be a bustling gateway to Vancouver. This infrastructure will support literacy by ensuring that amenities central to residents lives are welcoming and user friendly. The Marpole Business Association is a strong partner in literacy initiatives through participation in or support of focused events and through membership of the Marpole Literacy Task Group.
- This year Marpole community members were heartbroken to lose a beloved business on Granville Street. Characters (a book-seller and coffee shop) closed its doors after many years of being a Marpole icon. Characters' proprietors' provided a blueprint of how a business can support literacy initiatives by hosting a key art initiative (part of a five year collaboration between Emily Carr and the Marpole Business Association) last June at the shop. "Show Me How" was an activity in which community members were invited to write or illustrate instructions for how to design or create something. These responses were posted up in Characters. Characters was one of few Marpole storefronts – along with Starbucks - to regularly advertise literacy activities on behalf of literacy and community agencies and was a regular venue for living community conversations.
- This year the City of Vancouver's Planning Department continued to roll out community initiatives and consultations as it works towards finalising the Draft Marpole Community Plan. The city hosted Open Houses at storefronts on Granville Street and at the Marpole Place Neighbourhood House. Housing workshops, Transportation workshops, Street to Park information discussions (about changing street space into park space) were also held as well as walking tours to educate Marpole residents about the neighbourhood.
- Marpole held its second Connecting Marpole Day in August 2012 – hosted on the premises of Marpole Place Neighbourhood House and Marpole Oakridge Family Place with many Marpole Service providers represented, live music, street theatre and dance. The Marpole Literacy

Outreach Coordinator had an information stand. The event was supported by The Honourable Moira Stillwell, MLA for Vancouver Langara (which includes Marpole), who took the time to walk the streets and engage with community members.

- The S.U.C.C.E.S.S Granville Street office reports increased failure rates of the recently revamped Citizenship tests. The revised tests are harder to pass and organizations will clearly need to address the performance gaps. S.U.C.C.E.S.S also noted that concerns about the health literacy of new immigrants grew, particularly with regard to people not knowing how to follow basic doctor's instructions.
- Vancouver Public Library Marpole Branch advised of a new and revised city wide mission and values as well as new strategic plan for 2013 -2015, reflecting a strong commitment to working with other service providers to increase literacy skills, focusing on literacy in all its forms, be it reading, writing, math, financial or digital literacy.

### **Community development and literacy collaboration**

What are the important collaborations that have taken place to support literacy and the work of the task group?

- In the summer of 2012, chART – a five year public art project in Marpole run by Emily Carr, collaborated with Vancouver Public Library, the Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator, and Marpole Oakridge Family Place in an art project called Home. Emily Carr artists assisted community members and their children to cast their favourite objects brought from home in a mould made of florists green and plaster of Paris. They then wrote about the importance of their chosen object and how it represented “home” for them. This project was a wonderful community building exercise and some of the families who participated have become fast friends. Finished casts were displayed at the Marpole branch of Vancouver Public Library and at Connecting Marpole Day in August 2012.
- Raise a Reader funds have been implemented in support of an early years' program at the St. Augustine's Church where a Mother Goose style program is held three times monthly to educate and entertain families with children who are waiting to access the Food Bank on site. Programs at the Marpole Oakridge Family Place supported by the Raise A Reader funding include the popular Dad and Me program (a literacy circle and community meal for fathers and young children), weekly multicultural family circle times (Korean, Chinese, Japanese, English are some of the languages currently used), story-times, and, this year in November 2012 and March 2013, a set of workshops to introduce families to the use of E-Books and Apps for early readers. All of the above programs have been very well attended.
- The Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator continues to support (through attendance and advertising) all family literacy programming at Marpole Oakridge Family Place. This includes the Raise A Reader funded programs, Music Literacy circles, Health Literacy sessions with the nurse from Vancouver Coastal Health, physical literacy gym sessions for the children, story-times, culture specific celebrations such as Chinese New Year and St. Patrick's Day, multicultural activities and parent skills workshops such as Nobody's Perfect.
- The Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator provides a free information and enquiry session three Thursday mornings each month at the Marpole Oakridge Family Place. This program is entitled Tools for Life and is confidential.
- The Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator supports and advertises the educational programs of Task Group partners, for example, VCC adult education classes, all S.U.C.C.E.S.S offers including ELL, citizenship and settlement classes and the programming of Pacific Immigrant and Refugee Services (PIRS).

- The financial literacy workshops provided by Vancity Community Branch are supported by Marpole Literacy and in June 2012 a Free Investments and Retirement Seminar was held at Marpole Place Neighbourhood House in collaboration with Vancity and Marpole Literacy.
- Vancity regularly invites the Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator and other community partners to profile their resources at a table in the branch and to educate Vancity staff about their programs.
- The Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator and Work BC Main Street Satellite branch have been working together on providing field trips to Work BC. Two field trips were offered this year and Work BC staff provided a presentation about their services to those who attended.
- Family Literacy Week of 2013 was celebrated on January 27, 2013, with a community meal and a storyteller from Vancouver Society of Storytellers. The evening was supported by Vancouver Public Library Marpole Branch. The event was attended by 55 people.
- This year saw collaboration between Marpole Oakridge Family Place, the Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator and the Vancouver Public Library Marpole Branch to deliver two sets of workshops on E-Books and Apps. These workshops took place in November 2012 and March 2013. A VPL librarian provided an interactive presentation introducing families to how to use E-Books and Apps. Marpole Oakridge Family Place and the Literacy Outreach Coordinator provided a community meal and coordinated the workshops.
- The Marpole Parent Education Circle was introduced by the Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator and held one pilot talk in March 2013 on the subject of helping parents reduce the amount of screen time by school aged children. The talk drew on a previous talk given at South Vancouver Youth Centre by Vancouver Coastal Health. The talk offered five powerful solutions to reduce screen time in the home. It has been requested to be repeated.
- The Literacy Outreach Coordinator promoted the Teen Writing workshop of the Historic Joy Kogawa House in April 2013.
- In July 2013, The Marpole Business Association will partner with the Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator to offer a short story competition called My Marpole Story as part of the Marpole Business Association annual Summer-Fest. The competition will be judged by a representative from the Marpole Business Association, the Literacy Outreach Coordinator and a representative from the Historic Joy Kogawa House.
- A Clear Language workshop was organised in April 2013 by the Literacy Outreach Coordinator for literacy workers in Marpole. The workshop was led by Joan Acosta, previous editor of the West Coast Reader and recipient of the Order of British Columbia for her work in adult education. It was attended by a Langara College public speaking teacher, a representative from South Vancouver Family Place, a representative from South Vancouver Neighbourhood House, Marpole Oakridge Family Place staff, Marpole Neighbourhood House staff, and two Vancouver Literacy Outreach Coordinators.
- The Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator attended a BC Association of Community Response Networks meeting in order to network with community organisations working with seniors in Marpole, Oakridge and Kerrisdale.
- The Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator collaborates each Monday with the Family Support Worker at Marpole Oakridge Family Place to facilitate a program called Grandparents Learn and Lead. This program is specifically for grandparents and the grandchildren they regularly care for. This program began as a Food Skills for Grandparents program funded by United Way and using materials from the Canadian Diabetes Association. When its funding ended, the program continued as Grandparents Learn and Lead by popular demand. The program includes cooking together, an English vocabulary component, dance, exercise, skill sharing and field trips. The program content is driven by the participants. The program has been promoted through the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Line of the Parent Support Services Society of BC.

- Mental Health Literacy was a big focus this year. In September 2012, the Literacy Outreach Coordinator invited the Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre to launch their newly developed cross-cultural video at Marpole Oakridge Family Place. Lunch was provided. Kelty brought several key persons to the event. The event was poorly attended although the few people who did attend gave valuable feedback to the Kelty staff. The link to the video was advertised to all literacy partners in Marpole. Lessons were learned about presenting Mental Health information to community members and the Literacy Outreach Coordinator resolved to find a more effective way to do this.
- The Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator was invited to attend the Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre cross-cultural stakeholder meeting of Tuesday March 12, 2013. The aim of this meeting was to discuss how to promote and support the mental health and wellbeing of culturally and linguistically diverse families in BC. The meeting included discussions on how to roll out mental health services, how to partner on mental health delivery, how to reach different linguistic groups, how to make better use of local resources, and how to educate front line service providers. Different stakeholders shared information and networked. The Marpole Community has a great need for mental health literacy services, (this corroborated by a representative of the Vancouver Coastal Health South Mental Health Team), but services have to be delivered in a sensitive way for them to be effective. To this end the meeting was extremely informative and will inform the approach in Marpole.
- Literacy programming in Marpole supports the provision of information in as many relevant languages as possible. The Vancouver Public Library Marpole Branch pays attention to the needs of different linguistic groups as does the Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator, by ordering in the Newcomer's Guide produced by Welcome BC in various languages. Popular languages this year were Tagalog and Farsi as well as Russian, Spanish and Arabic. The Chinese and traditional Chinese books were also well received.
- This year, the Literacy Outreach Coordinator reached out to two Marpole elementary schools, Van Horne Elementary and Sir Wilfred Laurier Elementary. Van Horne kindly advertised literacy workshops relevant to parents in their newsletter. The Literacy Outreach Coordinator participated in two events at Sir Wilfred Laurier - the Camp Read evening interacting with students to read book reviews, and a Ready Set Learn morning, accompanied by fifteen children and parents and staff from Marpole Oakridge Family Place.
- Literacy Task Group member and partner Marpole Place Neighbourhood House continued its excellent and comprehensive work of supporting seniors, adults and school aged children. Targeted workshops, law clinics, ELL classes, computer classes, clubs such as knitting and bridge and out-trips are some of the programs provided. Food literacy had a big focus this year with the regular community meals augmented by a new community garden and a teaming up with Village Vancouver to organise a neighbourhood Food Network in Marpole. The Neighbourhood House caters for school aged children through its Super Saturdays program and holds multicultural and aboriginal celebrations. Various language groups are served. Voting and other civic literacy events also take place here.

What are the essential ongoing collaborations?

It is intended for all of the above collaborations to be ongoing. Excellent relationships have been built in the course of working together. Most of the programming is continuous with a break in the summer for many programs. Some of the workshops were stand-alone events but they can be repeated on demand.

## **What makes collaborations work well?**

Shared goals and resources make collaborations economically sound in a time of scarce resources, staff and funds. Collaborations create strong relationships between literacy partners which in turn build a sound literacy framework and referral system for community members and adds credibility to the delivery of literacy programming. It has also been found that initiatives which support and complement one another create dynamic and logical networks. An example of this is the Grandparents Lead and Learn program at Marpole Oakridge Family Place which leads to families being referred to the community garden of Marpole Place Neighbourhood House and other food related initiatives in the area – and from there it is a logical step to refer participants to recipe books and websites at the Vancouver Public Library Marpole Branch.

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

What priorities, goals and objectives have you addressed this year? And b) what actions were taken to address these, and who participated?

### **Goal 1: Create a communications process that will effectively and efficiently inform community members about programs and services in their community:**

Action point: An efficient literacy round table was once again upheld – in the form of the Marpole Literacy Task Group - with all members working together to improve communication in the community.

Action point: To develop a closer connection /network with the community's multi-faith groups: Aside from the Mother Goose program at the St. Augustine's church ( a collaboration between Marpole Oakridge Family Place and the Vancouver Public Library) outreach to multi faith groups has been slow and remains to be effectively carried out. A good relationship exists with the Cornerstone Church.

Action point: Create an inventory of communication tools, including print, online and networking: This year an advertising / outreach list was compiled, with the aim of ensuring that all corners of the community are reached by including all organisations, information points and key people on the list to receive all communications. A monthly outreach is planned to everyone on this list, through all avenues including word of mouth, leaflets, website, blog and newsletter posting, physical posting on noticeboards, and also via social media. The Blog created the previous year is still running. The Literacy Outreach Coordinator also spends a morning session each week actively networking in the community. The Literacy Outreach Coordinator now has a volunteer to assist in this process.

Action point: Develop an action plan on how to improve communication tools – targeted at ESL families, using survey information and round table feedback: This will be carried out as part of the outreach plan mentioned above. In addition, learning has taken place in Marpole this year regarding the application of clear language principles in communication which will assist ELL community members and assist literacy and community partners to communicate clearly regarding programming.

Action point: Disseminate communications action plan to service providers in the community: This will be carried out from October 2013. The outreach list will be shared with other literacy and community workers to strengthen their work and to obtain their feedback.

## **Goal 2: Ensure long term sustainability of current and new programs by increasing the capacity of service providers access to external funding sources**

The action points of identifying funding opportunities and of providing grant and proposal writing assistance to service providers were not achieved this year due to lack of capacity on the part of both the Literacy Outreach Coordinator and community partners. To make up for this, effort was made to utilize resources frugally and to collaborate as much as possible to enhance output with low expenditure. The Executive Director of Marpole Oakridge Family Place constantly seeks and completes grants and brings opportunities to the attention of the Task Group and the Literacy Outreach Coordinator. A volunteer grant writer would be an asset to the literacy service providers of Marpole.

## **Goal 3: Enhance service provider access to community spaces**

This goal was not achieved this year due to lack of time on the part of the Literacy Outreach Coordinator. Marpole service providers are generally very short of space. Fortunately the process of space inventory has been excellently taken forward by the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House, and perhaps Marpole customers could draw on this until space issues in Marpole can be resolved.

## **Goal 4: Increase community engagement**

Action point: Identify ways of engaging isolated community members: Work continued this year on engaging isolated community members through parent connectors and community outreach and advertising but many Marpolians remain isolated and unaware of services. Many families, seniors, single people and newcomers live in rental housing or rental apartments in Marpole. Many of the apartments can be accessed only by electronic buttons and none of them appear to have noticeboards. A new approach is needed to reach these residents. This year Marpole Place Neighbourhood House carried out excellent work on trying to reach seniors, through advertising and promoting their Forever Connected Program for seniors.

Action point: Marpole community and literacy programmers continued to present partnership based events and activities which were successful (see community collaborations)

*What adjustments were made to the plan? That is, as the year progressed were there new opportunities or were there changes that did not allow for some actions to be taken?*

No adjustments were made to the Marpole Community Literacy Plan this year.

## **Indications of success**

*How do you know that actions taken are working to support literacy? What impact have literacy initiatives had?*

Feedback about literacy work in Marpole comes in many forms. Some success indicators are quantifiable. However, every day we see expressions on the faces of people in our programs or reactions during conversations and these cannot be documented or captured. This is the daily feedback that helps us to know how successful the year has been. The Literacy Outreach Coordinator will set in place methods to capture more feedback in the year to come. For this year, here is some feedback that can be shared.

- An email was received from the librarian of the Sir Wilfred Laurier school to say that the children who attended the book review talks had come in enthusiastically seeking the books! Twenty children attended the Camp Read evening at which the book reviews took place. (This email is included at the end of the report)
- A community member who attended an E-Books workshop called to ask to be informed of all future workshops run through Marpole Literacy and another person asked for a specific workshop to be repeated.
- The Literacy Outreach Coordinator has experienced an increase in calls for information about ESL classes, citizenship tests, further education, how to find a job, how to meet other families in the community and how to choose a school, to name a few. The community has responded well to having a go-to person for information enquiries and referrals.
- Attendance numbers at programs are an indicator of the success of programs.
- Increased community engagement from participants. A good example this year is the mother who regularly attends Marpole Oakridge Family Place and now wants to be a key part of outreach by helping to stage a story-time in the park using her own abilities to draw a crowd and then promote the Family Place to families who may not know about it. Another success story is the single father who made connections through the Dad and Me program at the Family Place and now has friends and infrastructure in his life.

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### *What are the things that support literacy work?*

A discussion with Task Group members yielded common responses to this question. They are as follows:

- Create needs assessments before embarking on literacy work.
- Assess external events to see if they will affect literacy clients and why – for example, the change in the citizenship tests has affected pass rates – there must be a reason and literacy workers must look at this to see how to adjust their support of newcomers.
- A strong and committed Task Group supports literacy work by supporting the Literacy Outreach Coordinator in his/her work.
- Regular funding.
- Professional development opportunities to gain knowledge to be even more effective in literacy work.
- Networking, training, information and visioning sessions from Decoda and the Vancouver School Board. The sessions conducted this year were very useful for the Literacy Outreach Coordinators.
- Resource sites such as ABC literacy and Decoda.ca.
- Regular meetings between the Literacy Outreach Coordinators of Vancouver and the surrounding cities have proved to be very useful in terms of sharing ideas and challenges.

### **Challenges**

#### *What are the difficulties?*

- Our S.U.C.C.E.S.S Task Group representative believes that the personal circumstances of participants and the degree to which they fall under the “vulnerable populations” category affects delivery of literacy services. People who struggle with everyday needs such as lack of childcare and not having social capital to engage themselves in the community struggle to have time and energy to engage in literacy programming or find the connections to engage. When new immigrants come to Canada they need to start from scratch. They have low social capital and social sciences studies indicate that there is a direct relationship between social capital and labour market potential.
- Space is always a challenge in Marpole – especially space for workshops and confidential discussions. Spaces are often shared or very close to other spaces being utilized and it is not uncommon for a workshop held at Marpole Oakridge Family Place to take place with a background of drumming (appropriate or not!) from the excellent drummer who rents a room on the premises.
- Most of the Literacy Outreach Coordinators find that they do not have enough hours to accomplish all that needs to be done. L.O.C hours vary from 8 per week to 28 per week and most L.O.C’s would agree that if they had a full time position a lot more could be accomplished. The balance between administrative work and programming is also delicate for some Literacy Outreach Coordinators.

#### *What would help?*

- Regular meetings with Decoda, Vancouver School Board and any other organisations relevant to the provision of literacy support. If Literacy Outreach Coordinators are involved in all planning events and discussions pertaining to literacy, it would provide them with more information for the job, enable better planning and decisions and raise their profile and effectiveness.

- Space needs to be found for delivering programs.
- Continued funding and support is needed.
- Advocacy is needed for the Literacy Outreach Coordinator role and for literacy programming so that it continues to receive support at all levels of government and civil society.
- Literacy Outreach Coordinators believe that regular meetings with the Stewards of the position would be very useful.

### **For the coming year**

*Are there new opportunities, challenges or issues in your community? How will you respond to those?*

New opportunities: with the changes in the Marpole community as outlined in the Community Context section, greater population density will need more services to attend to the literacy needs of the community. Communication is key to making new residents aware of existing programs and Literacy Outreach Coordinators need to “shine the literacy lens” and have awareness campaigns to get the word out. Use of community notice boards needs to be maximized.

Still a challenge in Marpole:

- There are many families accessing mental health services, isolated seniors and new immigrants not being reached with services. These families reside chiefly in rental units that are accessed by electronic buttons so it is hard to get information through to them. There are no notice boards outside their buildings.
- Families do not have disposable income to pay for programs so many use subsidies or do not attend programs at all.
- Language is a barrier for many families if they use English as a second language.

*What goals, priorities or objectives will you work on in the coming year and what actions are planned against these goals?*

- Celebrate Family Literacy Week in January 2014 with a family oriented event on the theme of multiculturalism.
- Form a collaboration with the Oakridge Mall to promote literacy in Marpole through a story telling and information presence once a month.
- The “My Marpole Story” competition will encourage Marpolians from all walks of life to write their personal stories as part of Marpole Summer-fest activity.
- Work will continue on trying to get a Marpole business or community partner to sponsor / erect a notice board dedicated to literacy communication in Marpole, preferably close to the business district.
- Aim to get a grant for a public art project in the community – to foster multiculturalism in Marpole and build community.
- Promote Mental Health Literacy to frontline workers, settlement workers, teachers and doctors through forums and direct conversations in an effort to roll out mental health literacy/ awareness of mental health resources in a non-threatening and confidential way.
- To hold story times / book readings in open spaces in Marpole to bring people closer to the Marpole amenities by reaching out to them where they are. Methods here would be working with schools and the VPL to support reading events and holding irregular “flash mob” reading events in local parks.
- Provide continued literacy support to Marpole schools as per the events on the school calendars to enrich the experience of students. This would represent a partnership with each Marpole school as per its specific requirements.

- Connect school children to the Super Saturdays program at Marpole Place Neighbourhood House so that more children can be reached with literacy programming, and their families through them.
- Continue the Tools for Life program – an enquiry and referral service on site at Marpole Oakridge Family Place and in the community.
- Related to the Tools for Life program – begin to develop wallet-card sized clear language fact sheets / information maps on topics regularly needed by community members.
- Support parents with information and social integration via the Marpole Parent Education Circle monthly meeting.
- Grow the Grandparents Learn and Lead group that fosters activities with grandparents as caregivers and their grandchildren, through an extensive seniors outreach program. Connect in the key goals of community engagement and food literacy and introduce the participants to community gardens and the food network of Marpole and environs.
- Promote writing workshops run by the Historic Joy Kogawa house, to promote teen and adult literacy and social integration.
- Roll out the extensive advertising and outreach campaign that has been planned over the last six months with the primary aim of drawing in isolated community members.

*What will be required to meet the goals and effectively employ actions for the coming year?*

Success will depend on sustained action and an outcomes-based approach. The addition this year of a process to document outcomes with a brief report and photographic evidence will enable better evaluation of all work. A successful result to the extensive effort to reach out to isolated community members will also be essential for meeting the goals of this coming year.

<b>Mount Pleasant</b>
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## **Reflections on the current year**

### **Community Context**

*What has happened in the community over the past year that impacts people in the community and the ability of organizations to support literacy development?*

The community of Mount Pleasant is in transition, 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.

Furthermore, we continue to see an increasing numbers of homeless (and near-homeless) individuals in the community, high numbers of single parents and young families, high numbers of immigrants with second languages other than English, aging population and large percentages of urban Aboriginal populations in the City of Vancouver. In our planning process last January and April 2013, we identified

our ongoing focus on services for immigrant families and Aboriginal populations, and new partnerships have emerged to address the need for greater local collaboration and working together such as by sharing resources and community space.

## **Literacy Task Group**

Who takes part in the task group?

- Vancouver Public Library (Mount Pleasant Branch and Crescent Hill Branch)
- Vancouver Community College (VCC)
- Vancouver School Board (VSB) – Sir Charles Tupper Community School Coordinator
- Frontier College
- Vancouver Native Healthy Society (as Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society)
- Mount Pleasant Family Center
- UBC learning Exchange
- Langara Community College – Continuing Education
- Native Education College
- Pacific Immigrant Resources Society
- Little Mountain Neighbourhood House
- Coast Mental Health
- Parents as Teachers
- Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House

*How is the work of this group organized?*

This group works as a networking and resource sharing opportunity to address the literacy needs of our community. The group meets 4 times a year and the agenda for the following meeting is set at the end of each meeting.

In 2012 – 2013 there were four meetings in which the committee discussed the distribution of the Raise-a-Reader funding allocated to family literacy programming, as well as there were some discussion in how to best support and refer adult individuals into the Adult Basic Education programs available. The meetings also served to provide an oral account for each participating agency to share what literacy work they are already doing in within their agency and help inform the 2013 Community Literacy Plan.

## **Community Development and Literacy Collaboration**

*What are the important collaborations that have taken place to support literacy and the work of the task group?*

- MPNH in partnership with MPFC have collaborated in developing food literacy material for a resource to use during the Jarai-Montagnar (original from Vietnam) community kitchen sessions. The Montagnar are an aural culture and we needed to be creative around how to run an effective food literacy program. Furthermore, in collaboration with an UBC volunteer students the partners are finalizing the material for the sessions that are finally running from June to July 2013.
- MPFC and PIRS have partner in the coordination and delivery of a Family Literacy Summer Festival and PicNic activity. Although these two organizations have taken the lead everyone in

the community is supporting the event and will be present on that day with activities, resources and information to everyone that comes.

- Aboriginal Child and Family Support Services and MPNH have deepened their relationship by working together in food literacy programs with the Aboriginal families that live in our area. In collaboration, there were three community kitchen programs with 6 sessions each and it was delivered September – November 2012 and February – March 2013.
- MPNH in partnership with the UBC learning exchange have continued to collaborate to support volunteers in receiving train-the-trainer tutoring experience so they can deliver basic computer literacy classes to residents in our community. Many of the residents attending these workshops are seniors and newcomers men and women. Last year, we ran three programs of 6 weeks training (1 – 2 hours weekly). We ran a program in October – November 2012, February – March 2013 and May – June 2013.

#### *What are the essential ongoing collaborations?*

All the collaborations listed above are essential for the delivery of the various programs because of the small amount of funding for program delivery the delivery of those initiatives such as in food literacy and computer literacy would not be possible. Task Group partners are able to collaborate and explore partnerships during the meetings and then able to follow up in the specifics of the program delivery and logistics (i.e. space availability, staff time sharing for group support, outreaching, promotion and delivery).

#### *What makes collaborations work well?*

Everyone attending these meetings is representing local partners that are deeply 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 with and how we can best utilize our current resources in the most effective ways.

For example, during our planning sessions all the Task Group members shared about the literacy programs they are currently running and some of the challenges they faced. This process informed some of the potential future collaborations as well as the direction on how to make the collaborations more efficient. However, the challenge is that some staff hours or resources are already stretched enough and it will take more time to maximize collaborations. For example, one of the suggestions that emerged is to see if there could be collaborations when putting funding proposals together yet it requires more time and effort on top of what staffs are already working on as part of their job tasks.

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

##### *What priorities, goals or objectives have you addressed this year?*

Supported by the vision and principles guiding the work of the Task Group there were 3 goals identified and continued to be prioritized at Mount Pleasant.

1. Improve awareness and community literacy among citizens and service providers in an effort to improve access to services;
2. Establish mechanisms to improve collaboration and communication among service providers, leading to the enhancement of services and improve access to community literacy for citizens;
3. Support the sustainability of current and new programs through partnerships.

*What actions were taken to reach these? What organizations and groups participated in these actions?*

### **Actions**

- Expanded the Mount Pleasant area network to include organizations from the Little Mountain-Riley Park Area;
- Supported the ongoing development of new partnerships so we can meet the literacy needs of our community members –such as in the implementation of Raise-a-Reader activities;
- We began to look into opportunities for funding project specific collaborations such as the Family Literacy Summer Festival and PicNic gathering;
- Supported the need of community members to access mainstream foundation literacy needs such as the VCC Adult Basic Program that is right here in Mount Pleasant area;
- We continued to grow the current partnerships making the work of the Task Group a more coordinated effort with greater awareness of the resources in our community and within agencies;
- Computer literacy and food literacy sessions were delivered; programs for Aboriginal families and people were delivered; immigrants and long term residents civic literacy and community engagement skills.

### **Community Organizations and groups participating:**

- UBC learning exchange;
- Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House;
- Vancouver Public Library;
- Vancouver Community College;
- Frontier College;
- Vancouver School Board;
- Mount Pleasant Family Center;
- Vancouver Coastal Health;
- Pacific Immigrant Resources Society;
- Vancouver Native Health (as Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society);
- Little Mountain Neighbourhood House;
- Parents as Teachers Program.

*What adjustments were made to the plan?*

The main adjustment to the plan has been in the expansion of the geographical scope of the Task Group membership, because we have included a few more members from the Little Mountain-Riley Park area (south-west of Mount Pleasant area). There is also a greater focus on Family Literacy because of the funding received from Raise-a-Reader and the discussions we have had around allocation of funding and building collaboration.

### **Indications of Success**

*How do you know that actions taken are working to support literacy?*

- We have been able to deliver programs in collaboration despite the cash resources being limited or not available: task group participants have collaborated in sharing resources such as space, specific people's skills and experiences, volunteers, etc.
- Task group members have a greater sense of connection and solidarity for each other's efforts in addressing literacy needs and improving access to literacy resources;
- Ongoing communication, networking and collaboration between local partners (from non-profit to government agencies and institutions) and community members willingness to explore other forms of learning and asset building strategies;

- Funder`s flexibility in placing less restrictions in how to apply funds for the delivery of programs and activities; as well as their knowledge and awareness about the principles of community development and engagement processes.

### **What are the things that support literacy work?**

- Effective collaborations between local partners to address literacy barriers to community members and increase awareness of each other strength in supporting community needs. This is further enhanced by emerging partnerships among local organizations (from non-profit, to for profit to government agencies and institutions) and community member`s willingness to explore other forms of learning and asset building strategies;
- There is a strong culture of collaboration among service providers in our community;
- Ability and willingness of organizations to provide resources (either through staff hours or space allocation) to make it possible to implement activities and programs;
- Funder`s (Decoda Literacy Solutions) knowledge about community development and their flexibility by placing less restriction in how to apply funds for the delivery and types of activities.

### **Challenges**

#### *What are the difficulties?*

- Community partners are stretched and it is difficult for them to attend meetings, particularly for smaller organizations, so participation in the task group meetings was inconsistent.
- Despite avid networking and follow-up, the LOC limited hours limits the feasibility of more hands on support to the committee in the delivery of literacy activities and events.

#### *What would help?*

- More funding or support in putting together collaborative grant applications.

### **For the coming year 2013-2014**

#### *Are there new opportunities, challenges, or issues in your community? How will you respond to those?*

- Opportunity: The participants of the Task Group have been able to build greater connection and relationships and this might lead to great collaborations such as combining ideas and collaborating in writing proposals
- Challenge: The uncertainty of funding sources available for activities (i.e. RAR) and even for the LOC makes it difficult for the Task Group to do any long term planning or program development.
- Challenge: The changes in staff within our local partners leads to an ongoing process of getting to know the long term impact of literacy work in our area, as well as it takes times to build relationships among Task Group members.

#### *What goals, priorities or objectives will you work on in the coming year? What actions are planned against those goals?*

- This year the Task Group will continue to work in increase sharing of resources and collaborations for the delivery of program-project base activities as well as begin to explore funding seeking strategies to make the most effective projects more sustainable.

#### *What will be required to meet the goals and effectively employ actions for the coming year?*

- Maintenance of partnerships to delivered the family literacy programming and the continual partnership all the existing partners in the Task Group; ability to recruit volunteers; identification of facilities; advertising of program, and reporting requirements.

## **Reflections on the current year**

### **Literacy Task group**

*Who takes part in the task group?*

- 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
- Lea Laberge, Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House
- Marie Manansala, Collingwood Neighbourhood House
- William McMichael, Former Language Education Coordinator, UBC; Renfrew-Collingwood resident
- Timothy Shay, Literacy Outreach Coordinator, Collingwood Neighbourhood House
- Vincent Vezina, Library Technician, Vancouver Public Library Collingwood Branch

*How is the work of this group organized?*

- Service providers and active members in the community are recruited onto 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, bringing new ideas on improving literacy work in the neighbourhood and providing additional support from community service providers.

### **Community context**

*What has happened in the community over the past year that impacts people in the community and the ability of organizations to support literacy development?*

Some successful initiatives started last year have been well maintained and attended despite the loss of our previous LOC. Our former LOC left very quickly (and moved to another continent) so our new LOC had a bit of a learning curve. He had already been involved with the Collingwood Tower project, a weekly conversational English class for tenants of the Collingwood Tower, a low-income senior's residential building, and so that project has continued successfully. (It started in 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. For instance, this spring, (2013), a growing number of Mandarin speakers are attending and one multi-lingual senior has participated in making a simpler 'practical phrases' lesson plan as most of the group speak little or no English. Other seniors continue with a more advanced set of lessons and exercises. Other activities, such as pool, ping pong and Chinese mah-jong, potlucks, and outings to the local library branch and the neighbourhood house have been incorporated into this project. Several seniors, previously isolated, have become increasingly involved in community events outside their building. One senior started with the conversation group, escalated her volunteerism and now participates in various neighbourhood activities; for example she sits on the Renfrew-Collingwood Seniors' Advisory Council and the CNH Board of Directors. In addition the

weekly homemade snacks and camaraderie facilitate the meeting of neighbours for the first time in their own building.

- 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. Over the past year we learned from the new Statistics Canada findings that our neighbourhood continues to be very diverse and has a population that overwhelmingly speaks English as a second language. This has taught us that we need to continue to make efforts to reach out to those who do not speak English as a first language. Only about 30 percent of residents speak English as a first language.
- We wanted to get more engagement from residents of the Collingwood Tower. The new LOC has been organizing full-page legacy interviews that have been published in the *Renfrew-Collingwood Community News*. Based on the idea that our personal life stories are our most valuable legacy for our community and our families. Members of the CNH community are encouraged to share highlights of their lives through an interview. Subjects are asked to write their own version of the most important or memorable event in their lives. The published article, shared with the community creates intercultural bridges and a deeper perspective on the diverse global experience of our immediate neighbours.
- We have a number of family programs in Renfrew-Collingwood but we wanted to find ways to more easily enhance programs with increased opportunities to improve literacy. Figures from Statistics Canada have shown us that education levels attained by residents are lower than the city's average. Renfrew-Collingwood successfully received \$10,000 in Raise-a-Reader funds from the *Vancouver Sun* through Decoda Literacy Solutions. The money will be used in family literacy programs at CNH. The participants in the family programs (parents and children attend together) Families Branching Out, the First Nations Am'latsi Program and Family Place will benefit from increased family literacy initiatives such as more First Nations themed books and storytelling experiences. With the funds we will enhance the literacy component in these existing programs.
- Renfrew-Collingwood has the highest number of seniors of any neighbourhood in Vancouver. Community Action for Seniors' Independence (CASI), a pilot project aiming to help seniors live in their homes longer in Renfrew-Collingwood, has been running since fall 2010 providing non-medical supports to seniors. CASI provides local seniors with services from a community shuttle for seniors, and a light housekeeping service to a seniors walking club and a written guide to seniors' services in Renfrew-Collingwood. Seniors from the Collingwood Tower used the CASI shuttle to go on tours to the Collingwood library branch and to CNH to join programs such as the twice weekly community lunch.
- Renfrew-Collingwood was one of the first communities to complete a literacy plan. We finished the last year of implementation in 2011. With no further implementation funds and very little money for coordination, we find it challenging to keep all our initiatives sustainable. Luckily, more money for coordination and more funding opportunities were made possible, and with these funds we have been able to sustain our current projects, and also to support some new initiatives in the following year.

## **Community development and literacy collaboration**

*What are the important collaborations that have taken place to support literacy and the work of the task group?*

- Collaborating with our task group members and the organizations they represent, such as the school board, the Windermere Family of Schools, the Collingwood Community Policing Centre, the Collingwood and Renfrew library branches, Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House and CNH, we are able to bring out more ideas and discussions on how to support literacy in Renfrew-Collingwood. In-kind resources brought by them made it possible for us to maintain existing initiatives even with very limited funding. It also made it easier for us to spread information about initiatives and opportunities throughout our various organizations.
- Financial support from Decoda Literacy Solutions, and free space provided by Collingwood Neighbourhood House, Collingwood Community Policing Centre, Evergreen Community Health Centre, and the Collingwood Tower helped us maintain the ongoing literacy programs. Help from the BIA allowed us to work with local business to coordinate a local business walk.
- Cultural Connectors and the CASI program at CNH helped us reach out to more local seniors. Cultural Connectors are local residents from different cultural backgrounds who were recruited by CNH as volunteers to reach out to isolated individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds to tell them about and welcome them to programs and events in the community. Without the help of the Cultural Connectors, the ESL class at the Collingwood Tower would not be so successful.

## **What are the essential ongoing collaborations?**

- 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 BIA and the local policing centre joined our task group this year. Our library and Windermere Family of Schools contacts have been key participants. With more service providers gathered together, more collaboration will be built around literacy.
- Our collaborations with Cultural Connectors, CASI and other projects at CNH are also essential ongoing collaborations. Those collaborations help to build and expand the capacity of local residents and seniors and make use of local resources and network. They are the key to building accessible, sufficient and sustainable lifelong literacy programs for Renfrew-Collingwood residents.

## **What makes collaborations work well?**

- In Renfrew-Collingwood, we believe that literacy is more than mere reading and writing, more than the ability to calculate numbers or read charts and graphs. Literacy empowers people with the ability to express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings, with the opportunity to pursue personal dreams and build confidence, and most of all with the ability to access to social interactions. Our vision of literacy as a community building tool guides our steps and makes our collaborations more effective.
- In Renfrew-Collingwood we have a very strong culture of collaboration. We have a large group of service providers who meet every two months to share news and information and collaborate on neighbourhood initiatives. We also work with other services providers on a number of smaller initiatives. This culture of collaboration has served us well with the literacy project because we are comfortable and have a lot of experience working together on projects.

- Our literacy programs depend highly on the support of local residents and resources; in the long-run they also contribute back to local projects and events. The residents' capacity building and service network expansion both benefit and are benefited from our literacy programs. Take the Collingwood Tower Project for example: the CASI program gave us the opportunity to reach out to isolated, non-English-speaking seniors, the Cultural Connectors Project gives us the volunteers and ongoing support, and Collingwood Tower provides the space for activities. As the program goes on, over 70 seniors who live in the apartment have attended our literacy activities, and many of them also became active participants in other community programs, such as the walking club organized by CASI, the Renfrew-Collingwood Seniors' Advisory Council and supportive volunteerism at CNH and in the neighbourhood.

## Goals and actions for the current year

*What priorities, goals or objectives have you addressed this year?*

### Priority 1: Connect Residents and Service Providers

- Encourage the active participation among local service providers in the task group.
- Ensure service providers and residents within Renfrew-Collingwood know about and have access to community mapping information.
- Link service providers to resident gifts and skills.

### 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 a focus on seniors, adults and immigrants.
- Sustain programs through concrete resources and in-kind support from public, private and community organizations.

*What actions were taken to reach these? What organizations and groups participated in these actions?*

### Priority 1: Connect Residents and Service Providers

- Maintained the existing Renfrew-Collingwood Community Services Database and the Renfrew-Collingwood Community Maps website (<http://www.cnh.bc.ca/communitymap/>).
- New members from the Collingwood BIA and community policing centre 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 in Renfrew-Collingwood and one senior joined the CNH Board of Directors.

### Priority 2: Expand Capacity

- Literacy programs for seniors like the Collingwood Tower Project 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 and the neighbourhood house were well attended by local residents. These tours introduced local facilities and services to the participants.
- Cultural Connectors from CNH support the sustainability of many literacy programs and are all local residents who become leaders and facilitators in community work.
- Book kiosk at CNH offered families that are living in poverty the opportunity to conveniently access free books for their program participants. It also offered them opportunities to enjoy story-telling sessions.

### Priority 3: Maintain Existing Programs

- With the support from many task group members a new ESL teacher was hired to 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 two years now.
- With help from the Cultural Connectors, the Collingwood Tower Project provides local seniors with more accessible and friendly English learning opportunities. Started in September 2010, the Collingwood Tower Project has been well maintained and attended for almost three years.
- The Renfrew Collingwood Community Maps website: (<http://www.cnh.bc.ca/communitymap/>) and the Renfrew-Collingwood Community Walks website (<http://sites.google.com/site/rccommunitywalks/>) are well maintained and accessible to the public. Articles in both English and Chinese were published in the Renfrew-Collingwood Community News to introduce those websites to residents.

*What adjustments were made to the plan? That is, as the year progressed were there new opportunities or were there changes that did not allow for some actions to be taken?*

- 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

*How do you know that actions taken are working to support literacy? What impact have the literacy initiatives had?*

- 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. For example, seniors, who participate in our Collingwood Tower English conversation sessions, are from Russia, Hungary, Romania, Kazakhstan, China, the Philippines, and Canada. They come to the weekly conversation group not only to learn English, but also to share their own culture, values, and traditions. The seniors now organize monthly literacy potlucks at the Tower as an approach to encouraging the participation of more building residents. This has inspired a newly launched Recipe Book Project which will involve seniors, children, students in the Culinary Arts Program at Windermere Secondary School and the whole Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood. Other activities like festival celebrations and board games are incorporated into our literacy projects to

enhance English language skills. English learning provides local residents with ways to express themselves, to share their beliefs, and to build social connections.

- 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. Recently, when Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson was at CNH for a press conference the senior whose story was in the most recent *Renfrew-Collingwood Community News* asked to be introduced to Mayor Robertson and then presented a copy of the paper – folded over to the page showing her story – to him. That showed the confidence she had acquired because her story was out in the world.
- 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, and the Community Action for Seniors' Independence (CASI) project have come to share highlights of their services with participants in our literacy programs. Tours to the library and the neighbourhood house were also successfully organized and well attended by our participants. The Collingwood Branch of the VPL is now partnering with the Literacy program to offer weekly creative writing sessions, presented by the LOC to adolescents in the neighbourhood. The Collingwood Library also regularly donates books it has culled from its children's collection to our children's book kiosk. We regularly see a parent and one or two children cross-legged on the floor in front of the kiosk, quietly reading a book. The joy in their faces when we remind them that they can take the book home to enjoy is wonderful to see. We also enjoy having to straighten the very messy shelves quite regularly as that tells us that lots of people are combing through the free books!
- Different dimensions of literacy were appreciated and celebrated in the community. In our programs, we want to address as many aspects of literacy as possible. That is why our programs range from English classes, through the ESL Read On! page, legacy interviews, reading circles, recipe books, youth creative writing, community resource maps to community heritage walks. The acquisition of English proficiency is never treated as the ultimate goal in our programs. We want to incorporate English learning into our community building process. We most value the improved capacity and confidence of our participants. For example some of the participants from our literacy projects became involved in an EmbraceBC project called, "On the Table". The project pulled together several groups of seniors to work with artist leaders to create table cloths that tell the participants' stories. Through learning various artistic techniques and sharing stories and photos of their lives –which were incorporated in various ways onto the table cloths – the seniors practiced literacy skills, learned some artistic techniques and celebrated their life stories.

### **What are the things that support literacy work?**

#### **Local Residents**

- Cultural Connectors, active local residents in the community from a variety of cultural backgrounds, are important contributors and facilitators for many of our literacy projects.

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

#### Local Resources

- Representatives of local service providers who sit in our task group provided guidance for literacy work.
- Local service providers like Collingwood Neighbourhood House, Collingwood Community Policing Centre, Evergreen Community Health Centre, the Collingwood Tower and 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 from stories from other communities, and reflect on literacy and community building.

### Challenges

#### What are the difficulties?

- Our community was one of the first communities to start visioning and planning for literacy. We finished the last year of implementation in 2011. With no further implementation funds and little money for coordination received, we found it challenging to keep all our initiatives sustainable. Luckily, more money for coordination and more funding opportunities were made possible by Decoda, and with the funds, we are able to sustain our current projects and also to support some new initiatives through 2013 to 2014.
- We still find it challenging to measure and evaluate some of our current projects. Every month, 5000 copies of *Renfrew-Collingwood Community News* with an ESL Read On! page in it are distributed in the community. We cannot find out who the actual readers are. Since we view literacy from a broader angle, some projects we created are website-based. It is virtually impossible to get information like numbers and ages of participants. We tried to find ways to collect more information regarding those website-based projects by adding Google Analytics trackers to the websites. We are looking forward to finding out more ways to gather information on those projects.
- A close relationship is usually formed between participants and project facilitators. Sometimes if the project facilitator is replaced by a new person, we may face losing some participants as well. We find it challenging to attract more residents who can take on leadership roles without burning out the existing ones.

#### What would help?

- We would love to see more funding like Raise-a-Reader to enhance our existing projects and help us build new initiatives and increase resident capacity.

- 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.
- Improved access to lower-priced books with First Nations themes and stories as well as stories that feature immigrant children and families.

## **For the coming year**

*Are there new opportunities, challenges or issues in your community? How will you respond to those?*

- 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.
- A new Literacy Outreach Coordinator (LOC) was hired in March 2013 to continue working with the neighbourhood to coordinate the literacy work in Renfrew-Collingwood. The former LOC left very quickly so members of the steering committee continue to mentor the new LOC.
- Some task group members left their positions, and new people who replaced them continue to sit in the task group. It is challenging to keep the same level of engagement and excitement within the task group, since such changes occur from time to time. 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.

*What goals, priorities or objectives will you work on in the coming year? What actions are planned against those goals?*

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

- Outreach to more service providers.
- Connect residents to programs in the community.
- Link service providers to resident gifts and skills.
- Continue Read On! Monthly page in the *Renfrew-Collingwood Community News* for ESL learners.

### **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 Tower project.
- Develop and maintain Legacy Interview project in conjunction with publication in *Renfrew-Collingwood Community News*
- Weekly Literacy Reading Circle. “Anne of Green Gables” Read out loud or listen. All welcome.
- Weekly Literacy Outreach creative writing sessions for adolescents at the VPL Library in partnership with the Collingwood Branch begin Sept 2013
- Recipe Project. Collection of popular neighbourhood recipes has commenced. Seniors will test, transcribe, and collate submitted comfort food recipes. Collingwood School catchment children

will illustrate and write food haiku for the recipe collection. The completed recipe book is projected for publication during Spring, 2014.

- Make sure the programs are accessible to local residents.
- Sustain programs through concrete resources and in-kind support from public, private and community organizations.
- Open to new opportunities to expand and improve existing programs.

#### Priority 3: Review and Update Literacy Plan

- Review the Renfrew-Collingwood Literacy Plan, which was created four years ago.
- Learn from our achievements and examine literacy needs as they occur.

*What will be required to meet the goals and effectively employ actions for the coming year?*

- Local residents who participate and help facilitate our literacy projects.
- Task group members and an LOC who supports 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

### Reflections on the current year

#### Task Group

Who takes part in the task group?

The 2 subcommittees are:

1. Communication Strategy – The South Vancouver Area Service Providers (SVASPs)
  - Anne Tasker (Vancouver Public Library)
  - Andrea Harstone (BC Centre for Ability)
  - Andrea Krombein (Marpole Oakridge Family Place)
  - Barb Kirby -
  - Barry Goodwin (Progressive Intercultural Community Services)
  - Booth Palmer (City of Vancouver)
  - Cassidy Wise (Vancouver Coastal Health)
  - Chris Fuoco (John Oliver Secondary Community Schools Team)
  - Darlene Richardson (BC Housing)
  - Debbie Osborne (Parks Board)
  - Debra Graham (Parks Board)
  - Devcic, Kayo (Vancouver Coastal Health)
  - Elaine Addison (Vancouver Public Library)
  - Erie Maestro (Vancouver Public Library)
  - Geraldine Saul (Aboriginal Child and Family Support Services )
  - Helena Lee (Ministry of Child and Family Development)
  - Hidy Cheung (Vancouver Coastal Health)
  - Humaira Imtiaz (South Vancouver Neighbourhood House)
  - Iray Yu (Vancouver School Board Settlement Workers In Schools)

- Jane Ho (South Vancouver Youth Centre)
- Janette Lau (River District Centre)
- Jazmin Miranda (Vancouver Coastal Health)
- Jinder Johal (Vancouver Public Library)
- Joan Wright (South Vancouver Neighbourhood House)
- John Tran (Family Services of Greater Vancouver)
- Jonanne Gage (YWCA)
- June Wong (Family Services of Greater Vancouver)
- Karen Lai (Vancouver Public Library)
- Kathleen Potter (Scouts Canada)
- Kelly Read (Parents as Teachers and MLA Representative)
- Kiran Takhar (South Vancouver Neighbourhood House)
- Koyali Burman (South Vancouver Neighbourhood House)
- Kyra Lubell (River District Centre)
- Lee McIsaac (Boys and Girls Club)
- Lisa McCune (Vancouver Coastal Health)
- Lori Harkins (Parks Board)
- Lorrie Wager (Moberly Arts and Cultural Centre)
- Lucy Ly (Vancouver School Board)
- Margaret Naylor (Parks Board)
- Nancy Olson (Pacific Immigrant Resource Society)
- Noni Mildemberger (Vancouver Public Library)
- Pat Agon-Chen (Vancouver Coastal Health)
- Patrick King (YWCA)
- Richard Baker (Moberly Elementary Multicultural Worker)
- Sally Chan (Killarney Secondary Community Schools Team)
- Sandy Young (River District Centre)
- Scott Grosvenor (YMCA)
- Sharon Babu (South Vancouver Family Place)
- Shumin Wang (Fraserview Public Library)
- Siu-May Lui (Family Service of Greater Vancouver)
- Skye Lin (Progressive Intercultural Community Services)
- Syd Bosel (South Vancouver Family Place)
- Tamara Gorin (AHSS)
- Teri Corcoran (David Thompson Community Schools Team)
- Tina Nagata (Ministry of Child and Family Development)
- Tracey Macleod Yerxa (Marpole Oakridge Neighbourhood House)
- Tracy Howard (Marpole Oakridge Neighbourhood House)
- Tracy Burns (Parks Board)
- Vanessa Lam (Vancouver Coastal Health)
- Wei Wei Siew (South Vancouver Neighbourhood House)
- Zarmina Ali (Pacific Immigrant Resource Society)

## 2. Family Literacy

- Chelan Wallace until April 2013/Zinnia Clark as of May 2013 -(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)
- Jinder Johal (Vancouver Public Library South Hill)
- Lupita Boris (Pacific Immigrant Resource Society)
- Teri Corcoran (David Thompson Community Schools Team)
- Timothy Mcgeer (John Oliver Administration)
- Colleen Dickie (Vancouver School Board)

### **How is the work of this group organized?**

This past year, the Sunset Community Literacy Task Group took a new approach to task group meetings. We found it was a challenge for most members to attend a discrete “literacy” meeting on a regular basis, outside of their regular work demands. We also noted that our five goals were quite distinct and members interested in one particular literacy focus, weren’t necessarily involved in the others. Therefore, three separate task group subcommittees and two working groups were developed in order to address these needs.

The existing South Vancouver Area Service Providers Network was identified as an avenue for literacy collaboration. This long existing network meets monthly to share program and service information. Additionally, it hosts presentations about important community projects and collaborates on partners’ initiatives.

The LOC uses the SVASPs venue to discuss literacy events and strategies. Communication strategy initiatives are now implemented through the SVASP. At meetings, the LOC will create discussion around strategy, evaluations, surveys, and recruitment for the Digital Communication Strategy Workshop Series.

With the implementation of the Raise-a-Reader funding, a new Family Literacy Task Group Subcommittee emerged. This group met to discuss implementation for the next year, then morphed into the Sunset Community Fair (SCF) working group for the springtime. The SCF group meets bimonthly to prepare for the upcoming fair.

The South Vancouver Neighbourhood Food Network is a task group subcommittee that operates as an independent entity. This group consists mostly of partner organizations that deal with food security in Vancouver, as well as a small membership of local residents. The group meets monthly to organize community potlucks, food security workshops, and special events plus has recently supported a food asset mapping project. Under the leadership of several UBC interns, the group has collaboratively developed the resource.

Subsequently, the Community Spaces Inventory was created under the goal of improving community access to spaces. While many local businesses and organizations are involved in providing spaces, promoting the inventory and hosting information booths, a task group is not required for the coordination of this work. Thus, a working group is in charge of managing the online inventory, promotion, updating and hosting information booths. The LOC and Steward coordinate volunteers and interns to help in the ongoing maintenance of the website.

In September, a consortium of the SVASPs will participate in a digital communication strategy workshop series wherein they learn the tools and strategies to improve information sharing, networking

and promotion of programs and services in South Vancouver. This working group will take leadership to make advancements that will assist organizations across South Vancouver.

## **Community Context**

*What has happened in the community over the past year that impacts people in the community and the ability of organizations to support literacy development?*

### **South Vancouver Neighborhood House**

There has been a loss of funding from the United Way that supported a family drop in program. To bridge the programming gap left by this loss of funding, SVNH partnered with PIRS to offer a program called "Parents Connect" offered Tuesdays and Thursdays. It was an existing PIRS ESL program that offered child minding. Some of the SVNH families that attended the parents' drop-in have joined the program, however not all families have been able to attend the program due to lack of space.

SVNH is going to be offering a 1/week family drop-in funded by in house resources over the summer months. This will bridge the gap left by PIRS services which are closed during summer months.

Another important change to the funding climate in South Vancouver has been that the Federal government has repatriated the Settlement and English language training from the province. Now organizations, including SVNH, are going through a federal call for proposals for this program. Because of this funding shift consortiums for ELSA and Settlement Services (VISTA and Connect) have dissolved, resulting in a loss of a framework for collaboration.

The Neighborhood House has also lost MCFD social workers who rented space in house. They have been moved back to their MCFD offices due to changes in their mandate. This has meant that partnering and referrals are less fluid.

Staff from MCFD have reported a service gap for Tamil families in South Vancouver who have a hard time finding services including translators. This means that parents are unable to access important services in the community or do simple things such as offering homework support to their children.

### **Successes at SVNH:**

- Food Security: Rooftop garden, intergenerational garden
- The SV Homelessness report, the outcome is a website lists resources
- Our community development program has begun CED, green dialogue circles.

Secure three-year funding from United Way and an additional amount of City funding for one year to address food security has increased SVNH's ability to focus on food literacy.

A strengthened partnership with UBC has provided tutors for an after-school homework drop-in for youth with English as an additional language. There is potential for expansion in coming years.

Youth team staff have received training on media literacy and can bring this knowledge into their programs.

### **South Vancouver Family Place**

The loss of funding has reduced organizations ability to provide services that include literacy. The reduced amounts from Raise a Reader coupled with an increase in applications for this limited funding from both public partners and non-profit organizations has made it difficult to deliver family literacy programming in South Vancouver.

## David Thompson Family of Schools

The Family of schools lost ½ of their United Way funding which has impacted after school programming, loss of positions etc. There generally is a lack of any early literacy programming in all of the schools in the David Thompson family of schools. This is why the partnership to create an early literacy program at Tecumseh Elementary is so exciting. The program is a partnership between PICS, Tecumseh Elementary, the David Thompson Community Schools Team and South Vancouver Family Place.

There is a new urban farm at David Thompson Secondary which is a partnership between Fresh Roots Urban Farms and the Vancouver School Board. A number of the programs at David Thompson will be helping with the farm during the summer such as the summer camp and the 'Rec'n Read' program.

## Progressive Intercultural Community Services

PICS has 2 programs where they used to have 6 programs. Their two remaining programs have long waiting lists of 25-30 families per program.

## How is the work of this group organized?

Involvement in the South Vancouver Literacy Plan takes two 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. Meeting chair responsibilities rotate between South Vancouver Family Place, South Vancouver Neighbourhood House and the Literacy Outreach Coordinator.

A consortium of the SVASPs have been participating in a digital communication strategy workshop series wherein they've learned the tools and strategies to improve information sharing, networking and promotion of programs and services in South Vancouver. This working group will take leadership to make advancements that will assist organizations across South Vancouver.

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.

## Community Development and Literacy Collaborations

What are the important collaborations that have taken place to support 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).
- SVNH Children's Art and Music Rooftop Garden has had much community involvement and support from the City of Vancouver, Home Depot, David Thompson Secondary students, BioCYCLE, community residents and SVNH members and staff.

- Global Literacy is a David Thompson Secondary school club that the LOC connected with SVNH's Out-of-School Care program to facilitate reading club during after school hours.
- 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 community spaces inventory is made possible by the many business, organizations, schools, churches, etc. that have kindly offered their spaces for use.
- The Food Security E-newsletter gathers information from a network of over 40 partner organizations. Information circulates to a list serve of 149 subscribers.
- Ajay Puri Consulting facilitates our digital media workshop series with attendees from our South Vancouver Area Service Providers network.

#### **What are the essential ongoing collaborations?**

- Tecumseh Elementary hosted a Family Literacy Night with the support of community organizations including South Vancouver Family Place, Funds of Knowledge, South Vancouver Neighbourhood House, Canuck's Family Education Centre, Pacific Immigrant Resource Society and UBC.
- Vancouver local LOCs meet on a bi-monthly basis to exchange information, share resources and ideas, collaborate on city-wide literacy work, and discuss concerns. These gatherings have proven very valuable for LOCs.

#### **What makes collaborations work well?**

Our partnerships are most successful when partners work collaboratively rather than competitively. For instance, our Family Literacy Task Group members agreed on the need for a family literacy story time program in our local schools and are sharing the staffing, program materials and coordination of the program. This year several schools are undertaking their own literacy initiatives and have invited the task group to participate. It has been very beneficial having various organizations involved in planning processes.

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

#### **What priorities, goals or objectives have you addressed this year?**

We have now completed our original Sunset Community Literacy Plan that was created in 2009. Our original goals were used as a guidepost for this year's priorities. Updates have been added and new projects have unfolded over the past year. With the introduction of a new LOC in May, we will again need to update the plan.

*Goal 1: To identify and enhance ways for residents and service providers to have access to community space.*

*Goal 2: To inform residents about community opportunities through the development of a range of communication tools and by strengthening service provider networking and partnerships.*

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

*Goal 4: To enhance existing services, programs and projects that support our literacy vision and to communicate new developments with residents and service providers.*

*Goal 5: To improve family literacy through programming and events.*

**What actions were taken to reach these? What organizations and groups participated in these actions?**

- family literacy
- digital media workshops
- food literacy rooftop
- improve literacy awareness and connections

**Goal 1:**

The South Vancouver Community Spaces Inventory continues to be used as an online resource for the public and service providers. Maintenance is very simple and the website should be able to continue regardless of the LOC position.

**Goal 2:**

We have continued to improve communication strategies of South Vancouver Area Service Providers through our ongoing digital media workshop series. With the help of our social media consultant, Ajay Puri, we have hosted monthly digital media workshops. Our objective is to train South Vancouver service providers to enhance their digital media presence, ultimately to build their campaigns, increase their member numbers and have more purposeful communication strategies.

**January** Event-based Tools 101 – *Learn how to organize events more efficiently and cost-effectively through digital media such as Facebook, Eventbrite, Twitter, Mailchimp and Meetup.*

What adjustments were made to the plan? That is, as the year progressed were there new opportunities or were there changes that did not allow for some actions to be taken?

The major changes to the plan were the restructuring of task groups and incorporation of family literacy work through the Raise-a-Reader funds. Many city-wide (or wider-scope) organizations were unable to participate in the localized task group format and were not considered in the allocation of funds. Otherwise, all original objectives and goals were continued and supported.

**March** The Art of Presenting - *Tired of giving canned presentations but not sure how to change your message? Have you seen engaging presentations and wanted to present your work/ passion in a similar fashion? The art of giving great presentations will be showcased in this interactive session.*

**April Public Narrative** - *Public narrative is the art of translating values into action. It is a discursive process through which individuals, communities, and nations construct their identity, make choices, and inspire action. Because it engages both “head” and “heart”, narrative can instruct and inspire - teaching us not only how we should act, but moving us to act. Leaders use public narrative to interpret themselves to others, engage others in a sense of shared community, and inspire others to act on challenges that community must face. It is learning to tell a story of self, a story of us, and a story of now.*

**Goal 3:**

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 has also supported food literacy through the initiation of the SVNH Children’s Art and Music Rooftop Garden. Funding from the Neighbourhood Matching Fund, in-kind labour from community members and Home Depot staff as well as SVNH staff and program participants have made the rooftop garden a beautiful project. Garden beds are used by SVNH program participants as gardening learning opportunities and to grow food for programs. The rooftop is used daily by SVNH’s children’s programs such as preschool and Out-of-School Care and has encouraged children to feel ownership, pride, enjoyment of nature, understanding of food systems as well as providing healthy, fresh snack options.

**Goal 4 & 5:**

The Family Literacy task group subcommittee has undertaken 5 initiatives this year:

1. Grandparent’s Family Literacy Program

Looking at the Literacy BC fact sheets regarding Literacy and Seniors they report that 80% of Canadian seniors are working with low levels of literacy and are less likely to have sufficient skills for everyday life in Canada. For our group, who are immigrant seniors with low literacy in their own language much less English, the concern is even greater. Our program approach looks at literacy very broadly and the focus is providing this grandparent group with a broad set of skills that will enable them to participate more fully in community life. Our goal is for them to be more engaged with others in the community, for them to navigate community resources and to support their grand parenting skills. Reading and writing is not a major emphasis of the

program with more emphasis on social support, community resources, mental and physical health and positive approaches to grand parenting their young grandchildren. We do, however, have the VPL outreach librarian present a number of sessions around literacy and reading skills and as much as appropriate incorporate some aspects of reading. Their grandchildren ages 0 to 5 attend the program with their grandparents and will participate in an enhanced early childhood program offered in the same space.

2. Green Light to Kindergarten

This kindergarten transition program was developed by Family Place staff in 2007 in response to a need identified by Moberly teachers and families. Children were not ready for the transition to kindergarten and needed additional supports in areas that the kindergarten teachers, parents and our staff identified. Many of the children did not attend preschool but the families did attend Strong Start. Children were selected for the Green Light based on the staff's observations and the family's interest in the program. With the changes with Strong Start and other funding sources we were unable to continue these programs at the schools In June 2012. We now feel we are in the position to offer it again with the support of the local schools and with the VSB early learning team. Parents learn about age appropriate ways to support their children's literacy learning, separation anxiety, how to support their children in dressing, feeding and toileting themselves without assistance as well as other fundamental skills. The children are also supported by the staff in these areas.

3. Mother Goose

Mother Goose is a facilitated circle time program promoting literacy and bonding between parent or caregiver and child; learning songs, rhymes, & storytelling. This program is a relaxed and social way to build on parents' strengths and learn new ways of playing, soothing, and having fun with their child. This program supports parents to nourish their child's brain development and social skills. Parents have the opportunity to meet and share with other parents of young children.

4. Story time – An Intergenerational Family Literacy Project For Immigrant & Refugee Families

The overall purpose of the project is to support the development of language and literacy skills among immigrant and refugee families by introducing young children (aged 0 to 6) and their primary caregivers (mothers/grandmothers) to English through songs, stories and rhymes.

5. Fill Your Home with Books – Wonder of Reading

There are three major goals:

- a. To increase community and student enthusiasm for reading. To create a day-long celebration of reading; to have students bring "high energy" reading based activities to partner elementary schools; to collect and distribute over 10,000 gently used children's books
- b. To effectively use partnerships to increase awareness and knowledge of the importance of reading. To collaboratively work with elementary schools to implement home reading programs; recruit local celebrities to create commercials/posters/videos/endorsements; to connect students to reading sources (book stores, libraries, newspapers) and to bring reading sources into the schools.
- c. To move literacy programs and their goals from the school to the home. Educate parents on how to transfer and implement school based reading programs into their homes; to provide families with relevant information regarding the importance of developing reading skills in their children; to coordinate "read at Home" programs at each elementary school and set up a student-run literacy committee to award prizes to the elementary schools.

## **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 of 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 gained confidence in reading stories and singing songs with their children. Parents and caregivers had quality time with their children and at the same time children learned to listen and behave better.

## **What adjustments were made to the plan?**

- The Family Literacy Task Group was granted an extra \$1,200 which was distributed among the grant recipients.
- Henderson Elementary received funding from the ‘adopt-a-school’ program and no longer needed the \$1,000 allocated to them. This money will have to be redistributed by the Family Literacy Task Group.
- There was a change from a focus on the Sunset neighborhood to all of South Vancouver.
- Raise-a reader funding has changed the dynamic of the task group into a funding body or funding stewards

## **How do you know that actions taken are working to support literacy? What impact have the literacy initiatives had?**

### **Goal 1:**

We are able to record the success of the South Vancouver Community Spaces Inventory both quantitatively and qualitatively.

- more features than originally anticipated (blog, photo gallery, data organized 3 ways)
- There are an average of 15 user hits per day, with operation since October = 4,050 visitors in 9 months
- positive feedback from SVASPS, “This will be a very valuable resource to the community. I can already think of how I’m going to use it today.” Sharon Babu Family Place

### **Goal 2:**

There were 28 participants in total from the first three digital media workshops. Workshop topics were generated by surveyed interests of participants and South Vancouver Area Service Providers. The first three workshops have been “Event-based Tools 101,” “The Art of Presenting,” and “The Public Narrative.”

Evaluations from our first three Digital Media Workshops generated quite positive feedback:

- 100% of participants found the presenter to be knowledgeable
- 100% of participants found the information useful
- 100% of participants reported that information applied to their organization’s work
- Other feedback included requests for longer workshops and more time for participation

### **Goal 3:**

Our Food Security E-newsletter has been very successful in its reach. Our newsletter has a noticeably higher open and click rate than industry standards (see table below). Furthermore,

recipient numbers are increasing on average. We are shifting to a new format to integrate the newsletter with the blog.

Month	Open Rate	Click Rate	Recipients
<b>Industry Standard</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>N/A</b>
July	46	7	133
August	39	7	133
September	49	6	134
October	37	4	136
November	53	6	139
February	49	7	142
March	37	3	140
April	45	7	150

### What are the things that support literacy work?

In-kind staff time is the biggest contribution that supports neighborhood literacy work. In South Vancouver there is a collaborative group of professionals working together to support literacy. These collaborations have a long history and have developed over time. Vancouver Coastal Health played a large role in developing these relationships through the neighborhood community developer position that is no longer funded.

The South Vancouver Area Service Providers meeting plays a vital role in maintaining literacy collaborations and developing new ones. The South Vancouver Neighborhood House' holistic community development approach also nourishes literacy work in the neighborhood. The Community Schools Teams, The Vancouver Public Library's Outreach Librarians, the South Vancouver Family Place and South Vancouver Neighborhood Food Network all have philosophies and ways of working that support literacy work.

Programs such as Strong Start, Green Light to Kindergarten, Welcome to Kindergarten, Ready-set – Learn, VPL story time, Summer Reading Club also support literacy in South Vancouver.

This year our literacy network has expanded to include more task group members. Subsequently, Tecumseh Elementary's and John Oliver Secondary's school events have reached out to task group members looking for support and collaboration.

### Challenges

#### What are the difficulties?

What came up over and over again was a need for a clear and more formalized decision-making process for the Raise-a Reader funding. As mentioned above the task of distributing the funding has significantly changed the role of the Family Literacy Task Group. Members articulated that as more people apply for these funds there is a need for a formal discussion on how to develop a fair and impartial process for distributing the funds. There is a need for some guidelines and parameter from Decoda on creating this process.

- 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.
- Also the frequent staff changes at Decoda and uncertainty as to what grant amounts will be is a challenge.
- Many service providers are doing more programming with less money, which means that service providers don't have the resources to identify gaps and fill them.

### **What would help?**

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.

The Vancouver Public Library always has staffing to provide programs but many other organizations such South Vancouver Neighborhood House and South Vancouver Family Place do not have consistent funding.

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. Outreach to families who aren't connected to libraries or neighbourhood houses can be challenge but we need to look at ways of outreaching to these families.

### **For the coming year**

#### **Are there new opportunities, challenges, or issues in your community? How will you respond to those?**

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 are no funds to properly evaluate the project. 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 are exploring a model of combining 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.

Opportunities: The VPL is substantially changing staffing structures so children's librarians can focus on specific age levels. We will also have two teen librarians working out of branches. All librarians, adult and children, will work with the community more to meet changing needs. There is definitely a need for adult literacy in terms of e-books, computers. For the first time in the David Thompson Family of Schools an early years' literacy program will be offered. The new program at Tecumseh Elementary is exciting as it will have a designated space. The Wonder of Reading event by the John Oliver family of schools is another opportunity to connect with families and engage them in literacy. It will also be an opportunity to ask questions of families about their perceived needs and assets around literacy in the community. We will respond to these opportunities by continuing to partner with the VPL and find new ways of working together through our task groups. We will also be involved in the Wonder of Reading

event and discuss with organizers how the task group can support the event and continue the momentum.

There is increased support for at risk immigrant and refugee families being offered in South Vancouver thanks to Pacific Intercultural Resources Society (PIRS) and Circles of Care and Connection.

Potential program development:

- There is a tremendous impact on children of newcomers going through divorce; there is a need for a social/emotional wellness program for children of divorce.
- There is an enormous amount of conflict between Canadian born and newcomer members of the family. There is a need for workshops/training in behavioral issues, setting boundaries, strategies.
- Lack of services for multi-barriered families that struggle with mental health, addiction, and domestic violence.
- There is a need for newcomer families with homework help because of language differences between them and their children. Potential to connect these families with existing homework programs for children and youth offered by SVNH.
- There is an opportunity for more integration in the merging of the two roles of food security and literacy.

**What goals, priorities or objectives will you work on in the coming year? What actions are planned against those goals?**

For the coming year, we hope to support several existing literacy efforts. These include our digital media workshop series, monthly food security e-newsletter, literacy blog, community spaces inventory and our family literacy programs supported by Raise-a-Reader funding.

John Oliver Secondary is planning to host their campaign and event “The Wonder of Reading” in September. Literacy task group members will play an important role in the planning and facilitation of the event. South Vancouver Family Place, South Vancouver Neighbourhood House and Pacific Immigrant Resource Society have all pledged to host a family literacy activity during the event.

Since the LOC position was combined with our Food Security position in May, many new food literacy initiatives will be underway.

**What will be required to meet the goals and effectively employ actions for the coming year?**

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.

## 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.

### **Vancouver Community College – *update pending***

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 Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services (ACCESS), the Salvation Army, the Vancouver Public Library, the Vancouver Board of Education, Safeway, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. 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. This year, the department collaborated with the Vancouver Board of Education on the "Urban Connections: Learners Talking to Learners" project which was supported by Community Adult Literacy Program provincial funding. The department also received curriculum development money through the college to enhance literacy and numeracy resources centred on the Basic Education Community Garden which was started over a year ago.

### **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 9/10) 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**

In September 2009, a new Essential Skills Centre opened at the VCC Downtown Campus (250 West Pender). Course offerings include:

- 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 for immigrants and refugees living in Canada as well as for international visa students and visitors. VCC also offers the largest English language teacher training ([TESOL](#)) program in Western Canada. VCC ESL offers the following programs:

- ELSA - English Language Services for Adults - Broadway Campus
- English for Career Preparation and Advancement
- ESL at VCC - Literacy, Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced - Broadway and Downtown Campuses
- ESL Literacy Classes in the Community
- Classes for ESL adults who have limited literacy skills in their first language as well as English are available through VCC's ESL Outreach Department. Classes are available at community locations as well as at the Downtown Campus for students who are at a pre-beginner level in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Two more classes, one at Broadway and one Downtown, are available for those who have intermediate listening and speaking skills (CLB 4) and very low-level English reading and writing skills. Classes are offered mornings or evenings. There are three 12-week terms starting January, April and September.
- ESL Classes in the Community - Literacy, Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced

- 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.

### **World Beat**

Vancouver Community College (VCC), in partnership with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and YWCA, is offering an innovative program for vulnerable young immigrants and refugees. Called World Beat, this project combines educational, career and life planning with learning in music, literacy, language and essential workplace skills to engage and support the project participants in finding suitable paths for personal and career development. The program is open to young immigrants and refugees (aged 15- 25), having been in Canada for 5 years or less, who have low language and literacy levels, are no longer attending school, and have little awareness of how to access skill upgrading and career education opportunities. They may also face multiple barriers to settlement. Instructors from the VCC School of Language Studies and School of Music will deliver an integrated 16-week bridging program that is designed especially for youth. Outreach workers from S.U.C.C.E.S.S and YWCA will provide ongoing support to the project participants and connect them with community resources for their long- term development.

### **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 Dept 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 the Visually Impaired Adult Program.

### **Family Literacy Certificate Program**

Vancouver Community College, in partnership with Decoda Literacy Solutions, the Centre for Family Literacy, and Conestoga College is excited to continue its very successful online Family Literacy Certificate Program. Designed for those who currently work or plan to work in family literacy, this certificate program builds knowledge and skills in a wide range of areas that are key to high quality programs and services. Unique across Canada, this credential offers an excellent curriculum facilitated by leaders in the family literacy field. All courses are available online.

## **The Vancouver Board of Education**

### **Literacy K – 12**

There are 75 elementary schools, 17 elementary annexes and 18 secondary schools serving approximately 56,000 students in the Vancouver School District. In addition, there are over 60 district programs connected to the schools that address a wide range of student needs from enrichment to remedial.

The Board of Education annually submits to the Ministry an Achievement Contract which we call our “District Plan for Student Success”. The overall goal of that plan is success for each student with a focus on literacy. Specific areas of ongoing work and adjustments were identified as important to supporting success in the classroom and for each student in literacy:

- continued expansion and implementation of the Early Intervention Initiative to 39 elementary schools in 2012-2013
- 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
- continuing to focus on strong relationships with parents and caregivers
- supporting the expansion of the Aboriginal Focus School
- restructuring the district delivery model of academic support for Aboriginal students based on the 2012 -2013 pilot project
- introduction of the Multi-Interdisciplinary Support Team model 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
- differentiating instruction for all students according to their learning and behaviour needs, including making assessments for learning part of each classroom
- strengthening of district-wide assessment practices and development of district data reporting and collection
- supporting inquiry-based professional development and providing networking opportunities for staff and students to share their learning and successes

### **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.

## **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, we 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 our 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 continues to operate 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 six 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.

Vancouver Public Library (VPL) values its relationship and partnership with the Vancouver School Board. As we strive to enhance our role as Vancouver's centre for informal and non-formal learning, significant effort in 2012 was spent on community engagement activities and fostering community partnerships for collaborative programming and service delivery.

Vancouver Public Library's (VPL) resources and services act as catalysts for community learning, inspiration, and creativity. We know that learning also depends on the questions that are asked. In 2012, we turned the tables and asked ourselves some provocative questions. How can we build on the success of our services to children and teens to reach and inspire more families? How can we transform the way we deliver information and research services to support curiosity and learning? How can we impact more lives through high-quality, free and accessible public programs and training opportunities so that everyone in Vancouver can engage with the world of ideas and technology? How can we operate more efficiently so that we provide the best value for taxpayers?

Finding answers to these questions was not an easy task, nor was it a solitary endeavour. We consulted the community with our comprehensive "*Free-For-All: Reimagining Your Library!*" process. We met and spoke with those who use the Library and those who don't. We explored ideas with community partners. We debated with staff. We analyzed statistics. We conducted research. We produced a series of Service Reviews and service forecasts based on all of our work. And we received guidance from our Board of Trustees – the community members who oversee and guide the services of the library.

The year 2012 marked a time in our history when we celebrated the past and embraced the future. We laid the groundwork for the transformation that is to follow through the creation of our 2013-2015 Strategic Plan, inspired by a renewed vision and mission for the library.

Throughout 2012 we examined our services to Children, Teens and Families which then helped shape service delivery model for 2013 as well as inform the library's new Strategic plan. The review examined our service delivery model (staffing structure) and determined how to optimize it to support our patrons, families, educators, child care workers, community workers, etc.

Our review confirmed that VPL will continue to support the following:

- Continue to support family literacy.
- Use emerging technology to support a redefined concept of literacy.
- Expand multilingual and intergenerational services.
- Incorporate more play and informal learning into program design and delivery.
- Broaden the definition and delivery models of library programs.
- Become more flexible in development of programs and use of space.
- Respond to childhood and youth vulnerability in specific locations identified by local evidence-based research.

The following was identified as areas of priority to focus on:

- Continue to invest in services for early-years children with increased education and support for parents, caregivers, and early childhood educators.
- Expand services for middle-years children including education and support for parents, caregivers, and educators, in a broad range of library, school and community settings.
- Increase services for teens in a broad range of library, school, and community settings.
- Increase focus on family literacy and intergenerational services.
- Diversify content and format of programs to provide more opportunities for informal learning, play, and a wider range of learning styles.

Here is a summary of programs and services which were delivered to families, children and teens in 2012.

#### *Community Engagement*

- Teen-created and teen-managed projects generated by the Teen Advisory Groups and other youth-led groups (such as community centre councils) throughout the city. Library staff acted as facilitators, guiding participants in brainstorming activities, consensus-building, and project management. Staff also provided resources and support for implementing ideas that teens developed. Staff continue to work with teens to develop library collections and in 2012 brought teens from all over the city together to interact with each other and discuss and purchase material for VPL's teen collections.
- VPL consulted social and demographic data such as the Early Development Instrument and the Middle Years Development Instrument, and held extensive consultations with children, teens, parents, caregivers, educators and community service providers. The results were used to inform a new, neighbourhood-based service delivery model which will be implemented in Fall 2013.

#### *Service to children and families*

- VPL continues to offer a wide range of programming and services that support and promote literacy and lifelong learning. These included Moe the Mouse, a workshop commissioned by the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, designed to support speech development in young children through the use of toy animals, stories, songs and sound games; Man in the Moon Storytime, an early literacy program for male caregivers and young children; and Language Fun Storytime, a program for children with speech-language delays. This program, delivered by a VPL Children's Librarian and a Vancouver Coastal Health Speech-Language Pathologist, literacy support program incorporates snack time and play time as language boosting opportunities for the children.
- Early Years Community Librarians worked with Circles of Care and Connection, an organization supporting refugee families with young children, to provide programs where, in addition to hearing stories and learning about public library services, children and caregivers have the opportunity to participate in telling stories and practice their English-language skills.
- In response to community feedback, additional programs including storytimes, Family Board Game Nights, and Family Reading Nights have become part of regular evening and weekend events.
- Children's Librarians developed and delivered several early literacy workshops for parents, early childhood educators and community program staff. Programs were presented for groups which included Vancouver Society of Children's Centres staff; Pacific Immigrant Services; Native

Education College and the Japanese Language and Heritage School on topics such as “Rhymes and Songs” and “Storytime 101.”

### *Teens*

- Through mentorship from library staff, teens developed significant projects such as interactive art; spoken word nights; film screenings; craft activities and board game events. Many teen-led events attracted first-time library users. Most programs held at the Central Library involved teens from many parts of the city, bringing diverse groups of youth together.
- Four additional Teen Advisory Groups were formed at library branches. Oakridge, Britannia, South Hill and Mount Pleasant staff worked with teens to create or improve teen library spaces.
- Significant partnerships were formed with the Strathcona Youth Council; the Britannia Youth Committee, Citizen U; and the City of Vancouver Social Planning Department.
- The partnership with CitizenU, a community-building, anti-discrimination project run by the City of Vancouver, led to several successful teen-led programs. These included “It Starts With Me – A Dialogue Event” where teens explored issues of discrimination in everyday life, and a weekend series of workshops and a sleepover event at the Central Library which brought youth from CitizenU together with members of the Vancouver District Student Council.

### *Community Led Service Planning*

- Teen-created and teen-managed projects generated by the Teen Advisory Groups and other youth-led groups (such as community centre councils) throughout the city. Library staff acted as facilitators, guiding participants in brainstorming activities, consensus-building, and project management. Staff also provided resources and support for implementing ideas that teens developed. Staff continue to work with teens to develop library collections and 2012 brought teens from all over the city together to interact with each other and discuss and purchase material for VPL’s teen collections.
- VPL consulted social and demographic data such as the Early Development Instrument and the Middle Years Development Instrument, and held extensive consultations with children, teens, parents, caregivers, educators and community service providers. The results were used to inform a new, neighbourhood-based service delivery model which will be implemented in Fall 2013.

In summary, 2012 library trustees, management and staff, reflected and planned for the future. In early 2013 the library unveiled its new Strategic Plan for 2013 – 2015, along with a renewed Vision, Mission and Values along with priorities and goals. VPL’s 2013-2015 strategic plan is a re-imagining of how the library delivers service, brings programming to life and engages people throughout Vancouver - and wide-ranging research and 10 months of consultations were key elements in its development. VPL’s Free-for-all process heard from thousands of voices from across the city: from individuals and families to community organizations, partners and stakeholders, all of whom had different needs and different experiences with the library. Our commitment to children, family and teens along with our commitment to ensure we provide support our residents’ information and digital literacy needs are examples of where we wish to move forward.

"Our plan really builds on what we heard - on our research and on the many changes around us, locally and globally," says Sandra Singh, Chief Librarian. "It balances the traditional expectations of the library for collections and quiet study spaces with the energy of collaboration and creativity. This great library system has served Vancouver for more than 100 years. We're deepening our connection to our patrons and the entire city so it will continue to thrive well into the future."

[https://www.vpl.ca/news/details/highlights\\_of\\_vpls\\_new\\_strategic\\_plan](https://www.vpl.ca/news/details/highlights_of_vpls_new_strategic_plan)

\*\*For a breakdown of all accomplishments in 2011-2012, please see

<https://www.vpl.ca/images/uploads/file/pdf/VPL-LibraryBoard-Report-2011-2012ActionItemsCollated.pdf>

## **Conclusion**

Members of the Coordinating Committee will meet in the fall to continue supporting 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. Comment about the nature of the work, the breadth of the work, and the reach of the work were noted. Four years ago as this work began, the group had only imagined the possibilities. To see the communities reach this level of involvement and support has been remarkable. 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.