COMMUNITY LITERACY OF ONTARIO
MEMBERS' E-COMMUNIQUE
JUNE 2009

Dear CLO members,

Community Literacy of Ontario is pleased to present its **JUNE 2009** Members' E-Communiqué. Topics covered in this E-Communiqué are:

1. Summary of the Key Needs of Ontario's Community Literacy Agencies
2. The Learning Edge: Apprenticeship Issue
3. Brief Overview of Web 2.0
4. Online Modules on Literacy by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
5. Newly Released Data on Giving and Volunteering in Canada
6. Summer Recipes for Hard Working Literacy Practitioners!

SUMMARY OF THE KEY NEEDS OF ONTARIO'S COMMUNITY LITERACY AGENCIES

In March 2009, Community Literacy of Ontario sent out a membership survey to its 100 member programs, Ontario's community literacy agencies. It this survey, we asked our members about their key priorities and support needs. This is a summary of your survey responses. Seventy-nine agencies responded to this survey and as such, these results provide a very clear picture of the needs and priorities of Ontario's community literacy agencies. Community Literacy of Ontario has shared this information with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Priority #1: The Need for Increased Core Funding

The need for increased funding to deliver literacy programming was **overwhelmingly** identified as the top priority by Ontario's community literacy agencies. Again and again community literacy agencies noted that they are facing a funding crisis and that **the need to increase core funding is extremely urgent**.

Increased core funding is needed: to maintain current staffing in order to provide literacy instruction; to maintain or expand office space to serve adult students; to provide services to the influx of laid-off workers; to provide quality workbooks and resources to adult learners; and to expand services to meet new and emerging needs.

Priority #2: The Need for Additional Resources, Books and Learning Materials

Agencies indicated a strong need for a variety of additional resources in areas such as computer hardware and software; curriculum materials for lower level learners; resources of interest to young adults; curriculum materials for training learners in basics computer skills; math resources for adults; authentic workplace materials; resources on pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship; materials; new and engaging learning resources and general work books and resources for adult learners.

Priority #3: The Need for Additional Information, Resources and Training on CIPMS

Agencies requested more information, resources and training on the CIPMS (Continuous Improvement Performance Management System). Practitioners were interested in CIPMS generally, and specifically in data analysis, identification of trends, a better understanding of MTCU's expectations and requirements, understanding performance indicators, sharing resources and tools with other agencies; information management, and agency samples. More training in performance management was also strongly identified as a need.

Priority #4: The Need for Additional Information, Resources and Training on the Essential Skills

Another strong priority was for practitioners to receive additional resources and training on the Essential Skills. Ontario's community literacy agencies expressed a keen interest in learning more about the Essential Skills and assessment, demonstrations, profiles, materials, implementation into LBS programming, related resources, and keeping up with new information and websites. Again, agencies requested training in this area.

Priority #5: The Need for Additional Information, Resources and Training on Employment Ontario

A definite interest in gaining more information and training on Employment Ontario was expressed. This included: ongoing communication about all aspects of Employment Ontario; learning more about MTCU's planned direction for Training Services and the next steps for literacy; agency capacity development; partnership development within Employment Ontario; updates on the transformation for Employment Services and where specialized programming for adults with literacy issues would fit under the new model; a clearer picture of where literacy fits in the EO model and how to best position literacy services; sharing of best practices within EO; and how will literacy agencies that also deliver Employment Services fare under the new the model.

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Priority #6: The Need for More Practitioner Training

Ontario's community literacy agencies expressed a strong need for more practitioner training. Training was requested in all of the areas mentioned above (CIPMS, Employment Ontario and the Essential Skills). Other common needs identified were for training: new MTCU initiatives; new technologies; instructional strategies (particularly reading, math and learning disabilities) for paid staff and tutors; volunteer training; board orientation and development; best practices in literacy; and training for new practitioners.

Medium Priorities

Ontario's community literacy agencies also expressed a variety of priorities of medium importance. While important, these priorities were ranked substantially lower than the above high priorities. Medium priorities (in ranked order) were:

- **E-learning.** This included strategies, tools, and resources.

- **Advocacy.** Programs wanted CLO to continue to advocate for issues of importance to community literacy agencies (i.e. funding)

- **Assessment.** This included learning about current assessment tools such as CAMERA, taking training in assessment and learning more about MTCU's Learner Skill Attainment initiative

- **Administrative Issues.** This included administrative issues in dealing with high contact hours; strategies for decreasing the number of lost contacts; and policy development e.g. – governance, HR.

- **Curriculum Development.** This included developing curriculum and learning materials for community based agencies; developing more occupational and workforce literacy curriculum; Adult Literacy Curriculum

- **Learner Recruitment and Retention.** Programs wanted information and resources on effective strategies for recruiting and retaining learners.

- **Volunteer Recruitment and Training.** This included resources and training of recruiting and training tutors and other volunteers.

- **Information and Communication.** Programs requested more information on all MTCU initiatives, government relations, funding, and other key issues. They further wanted CLO to continue to synthesize, summarize and share information in a timely manner.

- **Second Career and Skills Training**. Programs wanted to know more about Second Career and how community literacy agencies fit into the picture. Some agencies noted how Second Career participants often needed more literacy support before entering skills training programs and that their needs were being missed.

Lower Priority Needs

Other areas were identified as needs by agencies but they were of a much lower priority than the ones identified above and included:

- Fundraising
- Partnership development
- Information management system
- Serving youth
- Marketing
- Succession planning
- Dealing with hard to serve clients
- English as a second language
- Family Literacy
- GED (General Equivalency Diploma)
- Risk Management
- Documentation (assessment, demonstrations, training plans)
- Accreditation for staff and programs

THE LEARNING EDGE: APPRENTICESHIP ISSUE

The Learning Edge is a highly regarded online resource for adult learners. Their most recent issue covers the important topic of apprenticeship. It is written for learners and is both interactive and engaging. Issue 10 of the Learning Edge covers topics such as: apprenticeship overview; apprentice voices; take the five steps of apprenticeship and key questions. Please see:
www.thewclc.ca/edge/issue10/index.html

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF WEB 2.0

So, what is Web 2.0 anyway? Web 2.0 is a variety of new online tools and technologies that are user-friendly, cost effective (low cost or often free), highly interactive, and are typically both beneficial and fun to use. Examples of Web 2.0 technologies are blogs, podcasts, video and photosharing sites, Twitter, and Facebook. *Common Craft* provides a user-friendly overview of Web 2.0 (or, as it is called here, social media) which is available by clicking this link:
www.commoncraft.com/socialmedia.

AlphaPlus Centre is highly involved in exploring these new technologies and their application to the Ontario literacy community. Please visit their website (www.alphaplus.ca) to learn more about their involvement in this exciting area.

As well, Community Literacy of Ontario is a partner in the national *Getting Online Project*. This project will soon release some wonderful print and online resources that overview many kinds of online learning technologies, including Web 2.0. CLO will be sending out more information on these *Getting Online* resources in the near future.

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ONLINE TRAINING MODULES ON LITERACY BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, CANADA

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) has prepared three online learning modules for literacy practitioners and adult and learners. These use activities, guiding questions, and video clips to guide participants through structured learning tools.

There are three modules:

1. Module A: An Overview of Literacy in Canada
2. Module B: Community Based Literacy Planning
3. Module C: Literacy: Looking at the Immigrant Experience

Click on the links below to learn more about the modules, to link to them, and to download accompanying materials. www.forum2008.cmec.ca/en/modules.html

NEWLY RELEASED DATA ON GIVING AND VOLUNTEERING IN CANADA

Just Released! Imagine Canada and Volunteer Canada has released the new results of the *Canadian Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* conducted in 2007 by Statistics Canada.

Come and learn about who is volunteering, who is giving to charitable organizations and why. See: www.givingandvolunteering.ca/pdf/csgvp_highlights_2007.pdf

SUMMER RECIPES FOR HARD WORKING LITERACY PRACTITIONERS!

Now that summertime is upon us, be sure to check out the **All Recipes** website (http://allrecipes.com/) to find a wide variety of delicious recipes.

For example, check out their *"Farmers Market Cook-Off"* recipes (http://allrecipes.com/HowTo/Farmers-Market-Field-Trip/Detail.aspx) or their *"Block Party Basics"* (http://allrecipes.com/HowTo/Block-Party-Basics/Detail.aspx) or their *"Summer Grilling Spectacular"* (http://allrecipes.com/features/holidays/summergrilling/2009.aspx).

Your friends at Community Literacy of Ontario hope you have a restful, fun and rejuvenating summer!

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