

**Community Literacy of Ontario**

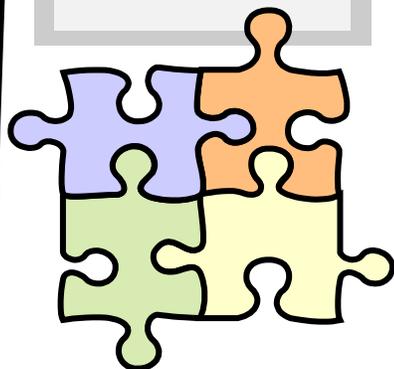
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## LBS Service Coordination Success Stories

*Community Literacy of Ontario is pleased to share some of the many service coordination success stories in this edition of "Our Voice".*

*CLO highlights 10 examples of successful service coordination partnerships between community-based LBS agencies and other service providers in their communities, such as Ontario Works, Employment Services, public health, homeless shelters, and many others.*

*These stories from Ontario's dynamic, creative, and innovative community-based literacy agencies are meant to inspire and encourage us all as we work with our partners to help create strong communities and support learners to achieve their goals.*

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### PTP Partners with Toronto Public Health Department

A unique partnership between [PTP Adult Learning & Employment Programs](#) (a community-based LBS agency) and the [Toronto Public Health Department](#) not only increased learners' literacy skills but also their awareness about health issues. What started as a series of workshops and a walking club, turned into a three-month [Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Program](#) with learners taking the lead.

When staff from PTP first starting talking with an outreach nurse from Public Health, there were discussions about how each group could help the other. Public Health wanted to bring its health promotion programs to a demographic of the population that included low-income, marginalized groups of diverse ethnicity. PTP had learners who fell into that target audience and who could benefit from healthy programs. It started with a dietician from Public Health delivering four workshops to PTP learners on topics such as healthy eating on a budget, understanding food labels, and nutritional shopping. Students at PTP were involved from the onset in arranging the workshops.

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## PTP partners with Toronto Public Health *(Continued from page 1)*

From there, students organized a structured walking club called 'Walking to Montreal'. They calculated how many kilometres it would take to walk to Montreal and then students walked each lunch break, all the while documenting the number of steps, and kilometres taken, in order to track when they reached their goal. Students from PTP's Advocacy and Event Planning Team organized everything from scheduling the walks, registering students, tracking the number of kilometres walked, and logging the use of pedometers which were provided on loan from Public Health. The partner also provided water bottles for walkers and consultants who helped with the workshops and walking program.



Through that partnership, PTP became aware of a grant available to community groups from Public Health. PTP applied and received \$5,000 to start a Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Program. PTP students applied to be peer leaders for the program, and the selected applicants received 2.5 days of training. A PTP instructor also participated in the training to assist learners, as needed.

The peer leaders planned and delivered presentations. Diabetes-friendly meals were prepared by PTP's Food Team. A trainer led exercise classes. Peer leaders got to work with a graphic artist to design a poster template and to make short videos. They developed presentation, communication, teamwork and marketing skills, and PTP learned more about teaching literacy skills to its learners through different activities and topics.

*"Our program has a holistic approach to learning," says Anne Marie Williams, Program Manager at PTP's West Site. "We know that when we feel better we learn more effectively. Our students recognized that the things they learn can make a difference in their lives and improve their literacy skills at the same time."*

Anne Marie said the program had amazing results and had a profound impact on the students. It contributed to a change in the type of food that the learners sell at their onsite snack shop; it led to the peer leaders being accepted to present a workshop at the annual Learner's Conference hosted by **Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy**; and, most importantly, it led to changes in lifestyle for learners and their families.



*"One dad stopped buying pop for his children when he learned how much sugar there was in it," says Anne Marie. "He thought he was being a good dad by getting them treats but he learned through the program that wasn't the case."*

PTP runs an employment preparation program called **Job Solutions**. The nine students who completed the peer leadership course will now be given training through Job Solutions on how to market and talk about the skills they developed through their involvement in the course.

There were some challenges that the learners had to work through related to working as a team, and the overall project required extra time from staff above what they were already doing in their regular programming. Despite the challenges, PTP would be interested in partnering with Public Health again and is waiting to hear if that is a possibility. Anne Marie says the partnership worked because PTP was able to help an organization with needs that met needs also identified by PTP's students. It also helped that the partner had funding available to contribute to the initiative.

For more information, visit [www.ptp.ca](http://www.ptp.ca).

## Anishnawbe Learners experience university life through Lakehead partnership

In Thunder Bay for the last five years, a global initiative designed to give disadvantaged adult learners a taste of university life has been the basis of a unique partnership between [Lakehead University](#) and the [Anishnawbe Skills Development Program](#) (ASDP) at the [Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre](#).



**Humanities 101** is an international program that was started in Chicago several years ago and has spread around the world through various universities. Professors teach a free non-credit course on their own time in one of the humanities such as philosophy, psychology or history. Courses usually run for about 12 weeks. Peter Fergus-Moore, the coordinator of ASDP, a Native community-based literacy program, was one of the first service providers in Thunder Bay to make referrals to the program when it was first offered at Lakehead University. Since then, he tries to refer two or three learners each year.

The only requirement is that a learner must be referred by a social agency (which includes LBS programs) and must be able to read at a basic level. *Humanities 101* offer a modified university course which means there are no final essays. Supper and transportation subsidies are provided. Peter says the program was started because there was a need to provide learners with a more diverse learning experience. Peter says he believes that when employment skills are the only focus of training programs, learners are getting “cheated”, especially those in poor economic situations.

The learners Peter has referred to the program have had positive experiences and some have changed their goal path as a result. One woman who attended the program finished her upgrading and went on to get an economics degree and is now attending law school. Even for those who don't pursue a university degree, the program gives them a boost of confidence as well as showing them what is possible.

*“We are creating workers, but not whole people,” says Peter. “This program exposes learners to a university experience in the gentlest and safest way possible.”*

Further education and training are the primary focus for many of ASDP's learners. ASDP has a strong partnership with the [Board of Education's Adult Education Centre](#) and staff from the Adult Education Centre come to the ASDP literacy program twice a week and help learners transition to credit programming to work towards obtaining their secondary school diploma. In turn, staff from ASDP attend the Adult Education Centre once a week to help credit students who are struggling with their courses. They ensure there is never more than a three-month overlap to comply with Ministry funding guidelines, but it is often enough support to get some learners over a challenging hump.

The partnership with the school board has helped increase referrals between both organizations and has addressed delivery gaps in the community. The Adult Education Centre closes in the summer but enrolled students who want to work through the summer months can come to ASDP to continue working on their courses.

With both partnerships, Peter says the highlights have been that those who have stuck with it, graduated and went on to further studies. Retention is an issue in their community, so whenever someone is able to stick it out, it is a success story. These types of partnerships can only work in urban settings where there are universities and/or adult education centres. Not all universities in Ontario offer the *Humanities 101* program but it's easy to find those that do by checking online or calling your local university directly.

For more information, email Peter Fergus-Moore at [peter.fergus-moore@shawcable.com](mailto:peter.fergus-moore@shawcable.com). You can learn more about *Humanities 101* via this website: <http://humanities101.lakeheadu.ca/>

## Northern and Southern LBS programs take same approach to partnership

On the surface, co-locating with another **Employment Ontario** (EO) agency may have obvious benefits such as shared space with free or low-cost rent, access to additional resources, and increased referrals. But for two rural community-based programs it has become much more than that.

LBS program coordinators for both the **St. Marys Adult Learning Program** in Southwestern Ontario and the **Schreiber-Terrace Bay Adult Learning Association** in Northern Ontario say the partnerships created from co-locating has increased their profiles and given them new-found respect among their **Employment Services** (ES) colleagues.

Deb Seidel is the coordinator of the Schreiber-Terrace Bay Adult Learning Association, which has been co-locating with Northwest Employment Works (NEW) for about two years. NEW is an EO-funded organization that helps adults with employment services.



*"This is a strong partnership that is good for the community," says Deb. "People see that training and employment services are offered together in the same location every week."*

Deb's program is located on the north shore of Lake Superior and over 80 km away from Marathon, which is the nearest town to offer employment services. Someone from NEW was coming to Schreiber-Terrace Bay Adult Learning Association's region once a week to assist with layoffs due to plant closures. At the same time, the new framework for ES programs was rolling out. It seemed a natural time to start partnership discussions. NEW uses space in the Learning Association's office once a week and the two groups run workshops together, see mutual clients, and make referrals back and forth. They use a common referral form which helps with intake and tracking of clients' information.

Because of the employment situation in the region, NEW is busier with referrals at this time, but the Learning Association helps with any skills upgrading that their clients need and also has a computer lab that clients can access. In turn, staff at NEW keep Deb abreast about what is happening outside the Schreiber-Terrace Bay community. With both agencies funded through EO, they are also a mutual support for each other when it comes to service coordination and other ministry initiatives.

*"They are always included in our service plan....we're able to plan programs around economic shifts because of the information they share with us and the open communication that exists," says Deb, adding, "and their staff have been instrumental in helping me with the EOIS CaMS!"*

Further south, in St. Marys, the landscape is different but the effect of an ES-LBS partnership is similar. The **St. Marys Adult Learning Program** moved to a new space in 2008, when **Partners in Employment** (PIE) opened a new storefront location on the town's main street and invited the LBS program to co-locate. Like the Schreiber-Terrace Bay Learning Association, they too are benefitting from sharing resources and joint marketing campaigns and materials. PIE is also a beneficial partner for keeping the learning program up to date on local labour market information, which in turn helps with their program planning.

## Northern and Southern programs take same approach to partnership

But, it's mutual respect that coordinator Yvonne Thompson says is the real highlight of the partnership.

*"It's not a big space we're in and sound travels. So they get to see what we do and we get to see what they do,"* says Yvonne. *"We have that understanding of who we both work for and that we want the best for our clients and that there is no competition between us."*

As well as referring clients to the Learning Program, PIE also purchases training from them when they have a need for something like basic computer skills workshops for their clients.

In both cases, the LBS programs have increased their exposure to other service providers in the community due to the partnership with employment services. The **Ontario Works** office is located right next to the Learning Association in Schreiber-Terrace Bay and there has been more communication among all three agencies now that NEW is sharing their space. The manager at PIE in St. Marys believes strongly in networking and allows other service providers in the community to use the centre's space when needed. The result is a strong case management approach in both communities.

*"The co-location partnership has exposed us to a lot of different stakeholders who wouldn't normally have contact with us or know what we are doing,"* says Yvonne in St. Marys.

There are minor challenges to sharing space. Each organization has to work within the hours of operation of the other and sometimes privacy can be an issue because of working within close quarters, particularly on days when programs are busy with client volume. But the benefits far outweigh those challenges and both LBS coordinators agree it's something other community-based programs should consider if it's an option in their areas.

Communication is key to making it work, both Yvonne and Deb agree. Keeping each other informed, either through regular meetings or casual conversations, ensures that it is an open learning environment for staff and learners.

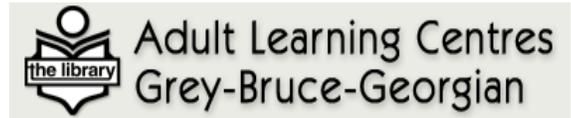
*"Welcome them into your program,"* says Deb. *"Make them feel they are part of the process and make it a positive experience for them. Make them want to know more about your program."*

For more information about the Schreiber-Terrace Bay program visit [www.schreiberliteracy.com](http://www.schreiberliteracy.com) and for the St. Marys program, visit [www.adultlearningprogramsofperth.com](http://www.adultlearningprogramsofperth.com).



## Kincardine community works together to create culture of learning in one centre

When a person leaves the **Lake Huron Learning Centre** in Kincardine, they read a sign that asks “*What did you learn today?*” The answer can be as varied as upgrading and literacy to yoga and photography. That’s because of a partnership among several community groups, all housed in one location, all offering something to learn.



One of those partners is the **Adult Learning Centres (ALC) Grey-Bruce-Georgian** which offers Literacy and Basic Skills services at the centre on a rent-free basis. Other partners include:

- ◆ **vpi**, an Employment Ontario agency that offers employment services such as career counselling, assistance with resumes and other job search tools, and workshops;
- ◆ **elearnnetwork.ca**, part of Contact North and provides access to online programs and courses;
- ◆ **Penetangore Regional Economic Development Corporation (PREDC)** which plays a role in developing new and existing businesses in the Kincardine area; and
- ◆ **Lake Huron Learning Centre**, the main stakeholder, provides the facility, and is a non-profit organization committed to providing general interest opportunities, credit and post-secondary courses and community forums.

The Centre’s goal is to improve lives through the acquisition of knowledge by offering affordable and accessible training. It’s an integrated, seamless learning environment. Clients don’t know what services others are accessing and some may even be accessing multiple courses from different service agencies. One person might be working at a table on an LBS course, someone else might be nearby on a computer doing e-learning, another group could be taking a Personal Support Worker (PSW) course, and another one might be taking an exam through a college or university under the supervision of a proctor. Then someone might walk in to take a yoga class. LBS learners are able to access employment services through *vpi*, get information about starting their own business from the economic development corporation or sit in on a workshop about native storytelling or public health.

*“Everything offered is all on the continuum of lifelong learning,”* says Maria Bertrand, Coordinator of the Kincardine ALC. *“It has increased exposure about all types of learning programs to the community and it reduces the stigma about upgrading because it promotes it as just part of the culture of the continuum of learning.”*

The partners meet regularly and discuss opportunities for learning that can be made available. Referrals happen back and forth among all the agencies. The building is open all week, leading to an increased access to service, which is a key benefit to the ALC. Volunteers and staff from other agencies are available to help the LBS learners, if needed. In return, ALC staff provide intake and general assessment for anyone wanting to take an Independent Learning Course and to assist learners registering for their first course. Students deemed not ready to work on their own are enrolled in the LBS program to upgrade their skills.

Besides sharing a philosophy of lifelong learning, the partners share space, resources, a central reception area, technology and technical support, and in some cases, volunteers. The partnership has been slowly growing for the last two years with the different organizations coming in at different times. It was originally an initiative of the Kincardine Mayor who wanted residents to have access to post-secondary training in the hopes it would reduce the out-migration of the area’s youth. Maria cautions other community-based programs wanting to start similar centres to be patient. *“Let it happen at a grassroots level and evolve.”*

For more information, visit the website of the ALC at: [www.adultlearningcentres.ca](http://www.adultlearningcentres.ca) or email Maria at [learning@bmts.com](mailto:learning@bmts.com).

## Northern Connections partners with Shabot Obaadijawan Algonquin First Nation

When the *Algonquins of Ontario Cultural Awakening* initiative was launched to revitalize and reintegrate Aboriginal culture, more people of mixed-Aboriginal descent began to identify with their Aboriginal heritage in the Shabot Lake region. The local community-based literacy program saw that as an opportunity to expand programming and to develop a partnership. **Northern Connections Adult Learning Centres** (Sharbot Lake and Northbrook) celebrated its new partnership with the **Shabot Obaadijawan Algonquin First Nation** with an open house in January 2012.

Since there is no specific Aboriginal learning centre in the region, Northern Connections has always tried to have a Native presence and influence in its program, either through a staff person or a board member. When their last Native staff person moved on to another job, Joyce Bigelow, Executive Director of Northern Connections, met with the Chief of the Shabot Obaadjiwan to see if there was more that Northern Connections could do. With some additional one-time funding from Employment Ontario, the literacy program purchased Native-specific resources and contracted someone from the Shabot Obaadjiwan to review the resources for cultural relevance and accuracy.

That connection has now grown into a partnership, funded for two years through the local Community Futures Development by the Eastern Ontario Development Program. The Shabot Obaadjiwan has someone onsite at Northern Connections 2.5 days a week to help with intake. Their presence has increased Aboriginal referrals to the literacy program. *“By helping with intake and having a presence in our centre, it helps our Native learners feel more comfortable,”* says Joyce.

Over the next two years, both organizations plan to do joint training, focusing on self-employment skills, as well as literacy and computer skills. Joyce says it’s not replacing their literacy or employment services; it’s bringing a Native perspective and presence. For the Shabot Obaadjiwan, it means they have access to funding and space they didn’t have before, to do the training that they want to do. As well as being able to take literacy classes, the Aboriginal clients now have better access to **ACE online courses**, diploma programs, and credits towards a secondary school diploma, because of the partnerships Northern Connections already had with local **colleges** and **school boards**.

From a service coordination perspective, Joyce says they will now have a better handle on the type of programs to plan based on information that the Aboriginal staff can provide.

*“They have access to the population, through their newsletters and other outreach, where they will be able to do surveys and find out what the needs are,”* says Joyce. *“We will be better at serving this whole section of our community that I don’t think we had been serving enough.”*

She says it’s been a ‘tiptoeing’ process for both partners with the Northern Connections staff still learning about the culture and the right steps to take when communicating and the Native population overcoming a negative image of educational institutions, but she thinks they are changing that and with time it will get even better.

*“Word of mouth is starting to spread and people who might not have heard of us are starting to look at us and see what we can do.”*  
For more information, email Joyce at [literacy@frontenac.net](mailto:literacy@frontenac.net).



## Municipality of Waterloo works closely with The Literacy Group

For years, the **Regional Municipality of Waterloo** has had strong connections to the literacy programs in its area. **Project READ**, the regional literacy network, has long been doing literacy assessments on a fee-for-service basis for **Ontario Works** clients, and that relationship has developed into a successful partnership between the municipality and **The Literacy Group**, a community-based Literacy and Basic Skills program, serving the region.

The Literacy Group developed a program specifically for the region's OW clients called Workplace Readiness. It's a fee-based program, offered four days per week for eight weeks. Focusing on all nine Essential Skills, the program is set up to reflect a work environment with rules of conduct that would be expected in a workplace. Each time The Literacy Group runs a program they notify Ontario Works, which promotes the program to their clients and pays for them to attend. Clients need to have at least a Grade 10 education and sufficient literacy skills. When space allows, the program is offered for free to learners, who meet the program criteria, from The Literacy Group and from other LBS service providers in the region.

Eligible clients undergo a TOWES assessment and the program is designed around the skills the learners have, the occupations they are well-suited for, and the work they need to do to improve their skills to match job requirements. Guests are brought in to speak about issues related to the workplace, such as health and safety. A new component addresses the use of social media, in the workplace and in job searching.

*"We don't do career counselling or resumes but we get them comfortable with identifying what their skills are and how to market them,"* says Carol Risidore, Executive Director of The Literacy Group.

Carol says the partnership benefits both parties because the goal of OW is to move people into employment and The Literacy Group's program helps prepare them for that. Right from the start they talk to the clients about appropriate behaviour in the workplace and expectations of employers. Because the program models a workplace, there are consequences if a learner doesn't abide by the rules of the program.

*"We see behaviour patterns change. Clients become more confident because they know what their skills are, and they have a realistic opinion of how to be successful in the job they are looking at,"* says Carol. The partnership has led to an increase in referrals to the regular LBS programming offered by The Literacy Group and to OW contracting a fee-for service computer training program for OW clients. Carol says caseworkers have an increased awareness of how their program can help OW accomplish its goal---to get people to employment.

The partnership started three years ago, Carol says, when The Literacy Group realized they couldn't continue to rely on normal funding to meet the training needs of their community. Carol was aware that OW caseworkers had access to training funds, so she met with a representative from the Region of Waterloo to explore the connection between what they needed and what The Literacy Group could do. Ontario Works pays \$100 per client to attend the training program and that covers the cost of a contract instructor, materials, and some of the cost of their regular program. She says other community-based literacy programs can do the same thing.

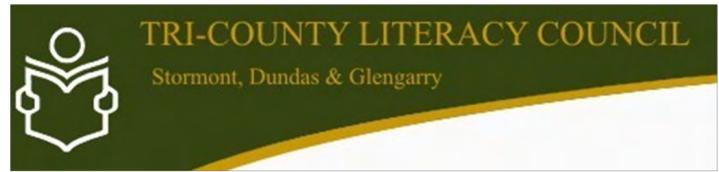
*"There is money available, but you don't know if it will fit with what you can do unless you ask,"* she says. To date, they have had 22 people go through the program and 16 have moved on to employment. For future sessions they are going to add a follow-up piece to see if the learners are still employed. Carol says she is happy to share materials that she has developed and to talk with any community-based agencies interested in developing a similar partnership.



Visit them at [www.theliteracygroup.com](http://www.theliteracygroup.com).

## Tri-County Literacy Council provides services to other LBS and EO partners

For almost 26 years, the Literacy and Basic Skills partners in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry counties have been operating a centralized assessment centre. **First Stop**, as it is now known, is operated by the **Tri-County Literacy Council** in Cornwall, but is run and marketed as a separate service from its LBS program.



A staff of three conduct full literacy assessments and based on the results, learners are either referred to the Literacy Council, **St. Lawrence College** or **TR Leger Adult Credit Program**. Extensive outreach in the community means referrals come into First Stop from a wide range of community stakeholders, including hospitals, probation offices, mental health facilities and private trainers. This successful model led to recent partnerships with the local **Ontario Works** and **Job Zone**, an Employment Ontario-funded employment service agency. A formal written agreement is in place between First Stop, Ontario Works and Job Zone stating that any client who is suspected to have a literacy issue is referred to First Stop for an assessment.

First Stop sends monthly reports to all partners as evidence of the assessments and referrals that have been done. A variety of assessment tools are used that address all aspects of the learner’s life. The extensive results mean learners are not only referred to training and education programs but may also be referred to health or financial programs, depending on their needs. The thoroughness of the assessments means the clients are getting to the right program and the training providers are happy with the depth of information they receive.

*“The providers often say by the time they get a learner, they know what they take in their coffee,”* jokes Dina McGowan, Executive Director of Tri-County Literacy Council and First Zone. The centralized assessment service has ensured a seamless and transparent service coordination model in the region. In fact, Tri-County Literacy Council’s LBS program developed as a result of the assessment service when results showed many clients had literacy barriers and there was a need for a volunteer, community-based, one-to-one program.

Many decisions about the assessment service are made at the Literacy Service Plan table, including the development and use of common assessment forms and referral protocols. Dina says communication is the key to staying on top of any changes in programs so that referrals are always accurate. Assessors will book days out of the office and go out in the community to collect information to make sure everything is up-to-date. They also serve on a lot of committees and, in between, there is a lot of back and forth communication. It is that commitment and transparency that enabled them to expand the partnership to Job Zone in 2009 and OW this past spring, says Dina.

*“When we approached them we were clear in knowing what the benefits and features were because of our track record with the MTCU-funded programs. The big thing was promoting the idea of letting the experts do their jobs. They’re the caseworkers and we’re the educators and no one wanted to see clients passed on to the wrong programs and risk losing them altogether.”*

The biggest challenge is keeping up with demand, with sometimes 30 clients waiting for an assessment appointment. Tri-County Literacy Council uses its core LBS funding to support First Stop and is only able to do minimal fund raising. More funding would help with the backlog, says Dina, but in the interim she would rather have a backlog and see assessments done right, than to rush people through and make mistakes.

*“Back in the beginning I had a realization that we had to make our service so integral to the other programs in the community that if something put us in jeopardy our partners would come to our rescue.”*

For more information, visit their website at: [www.tricountyliteracycouncil.ca](http://www.tricountyliteracycouncil.ca) or email Dina at [tri-countyliteracy@on.aibn.com](mailto:tri-countyliteracy@on.aibn.com).

## Homeless shelter clients get literacy help from John Howard Society

The **John Howard Society (JHS) of Ottawa** has become a local expert in the area of drop-in literacy due to the long standing partnership between its Literacy and Basic Skills program and the **homeless shelters** in its community. For several years, JHS has been running literacy programs at about eight different shelters and drop-in community centres for adults who are not in a position to commit to a more permanent type of program.

The expertise they have developed in this type of program delivery has opened the doors to other partnerships, including a new one with the **Royal Ottawa Hospital** where JHS will be running an employment skills training program for the hospital's mental health patients.

*"One of the reasons the hospital was interested in partnering with us was because we'd been doing successful work in this area for several years with clients with multiple barriers,"* says Jan Goatcher, Coordinator of the JHS's Skills Plus LBS program.

The drop-in literacy program is for those who are unable to commit to a regular literacy program, whether due to mental health, addiction or other issues. A basic assessment is done with each learner, but nothing overly in depth. If the learners were able to participate in a full assessment they would be referred to the regular onsite LBS program. Basic literacy activities are delivered such as a newspaper group where current event stories are read and discussed, and computer programs that offer an introduction to email and the internet. Staff will also work with learners to help them read and respond to letters from family or from government agencies such as **Ontario Works** and the **Ontario Disability Support Program**.

LBS staff work closely with staff at the shelters and outreach centres to plan services that they think are best for their clients. Both organizations also partner in the area of marketing, with each agency promoting the other and its services to the community. There is a contact person at each location and besides providing free space and refreshments; centre staff help with input into the program design and activities needed. It's a benefit to their clients as they are getting skills-building in areas where they need it most, and in a way that is accessible to them, given their life situations. Learners enrolled in the drop-in literacy program also have access to any of the programs and services offered by the JHS, which focuses on 'justice-involved' adults.

The drop-in literacy programs were originally started with funding from the **Trillium Foundation** but finding a sustainable funding source has been the program's biggest challenge. In years when they are unable to get funding, they still offer the program, though on a more limited basis and with volunteers rather than staff. Jan says the program meets an identified gap in the community, so it's important to keep it going, despite any funding challenges. Their successful partnership with the shelters has helped JHS submit successful applications for other programs though, including the new one at the Royal Ottawa Hospital which is funded through the United Way.

*"Most funding applications ask for examples of partnerships and how they have been successful,"* says Jan. *"We can talk about the drop-in literacy program and the partnerships we have developed in the community because of it. We've been doing it for so many years, even before it was trendy to have partners."*

Jan suggests that for other community-based programs to start a similar partnership they must first find a person at the partner location that is going to be a champion for the literacy program. It's equally important for her staff to also be involved with the shelters. They do this by attending monthly meetings and other events. *"We'll do other things that are needed, above and over the literacy pieces, just to be good team players."*

For more information about this program, visit [www.jhsottawa.ca](http://www.jhsottawa.ca).



## Pilot program strengthens partnerships for Prince Edward Learning Centre

The **Prince Edward Learning Centre** (PELC) in Picton is part of one of four adult learning regional partnership projects in the province piloting the **MITER** program (**Model of Inclusive Training and Education in Rural Settings**). While the overall project was funded to look at centralized intake and assessment, PELC is focusing only on intake. Learners come to one central location in Picton, where an intake is completed using a common form that all partners agreed to. Based on the information collected, a referral is made to the most appropriate training and education partner in the region, which includes two **school boards** and a **college**.

Most of the learners that come into the program are interested in credit or post-secondary education, often with the future steps being employment. The learner is not only referred to the organization that will help them meet their goal, but often an appointment is made for them right on the spot. A PDF of the intake form is immediately sent to the referral agency so that it has all the information it needs when the learner arrives for his or her appointment. This saves the learner having to answer similar questions and also saves the referral agency time.

*"We're shepherding the learners through the process,"* says Linda Conley, PELC Executive Director, who is also coordinating the project in her area. *"Before this, a lot of people used to end up in the wrong place and fall through the cracks."*

The partnership also gives learners enrolled at PELC exposure to their next step programs. They can get help preparing for the school board PLAR exams or they can take a health study course if they are interested in going on to the Personal Support Worker program at the college.

It has helped PELC strengthen partnerships with other service providers in the community such as **Employment Services** and **Ontario Works**. Before the pilot program started, outreach sessions were held in the community with a wide range of service providers to make them aware of the centralized intake model for education and training. Now, OW case workers don't need to worry about learning about all the different training programs there are in the county because they can refer their clients to just one central location and be assured that they will get all the information they need.

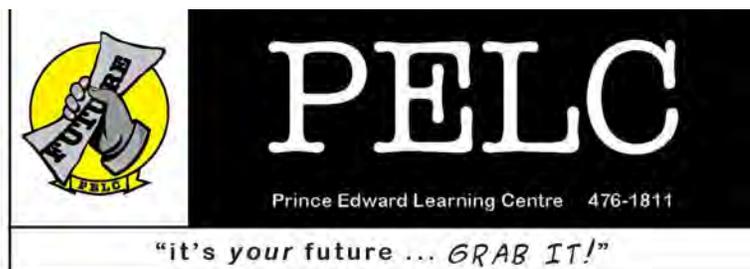
Since beginning the piloting of the common intake model in March 2012, PELC has seen a significant increase in referrals to its own program as well as to the partners. However, Linda says the biggest benefit is that there is a better understanding among the partners about who does what. For example, the difference between the two school board's approaches to adult education is now clearer and the school boards and college have a clearer picture of the roles that LBS programs can play in the whole retraining process.

*"Now that everyone knows the differences in the programs, there is less competition amongst the providers,"* says Linda, who added that one of the highlights of the partnership has been seeing all the partners talking to each other and making referrals back and forth.

Linda isn't sure how the partnership will proceed once the pilot project funding comes to an end, but she believes they will all continue to use the common intake form and the good working relationships that have been built will continue.

As Linda notes, *"Through this partnership we have increased our credibility in the adult retraining community."*

For more information, visit [www.pelc.ca](http://www.pelc.ca)



## Strategies for Successful Service Coordination Partnerships

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### JUNE 2012 NEWSLETTER

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Through this newsletter, Community Literacy of Ontario hopes we've met our goal of showcasing the hard work, creativity, innovation, and strong commitment to community and adult learners that are typical of Ontario's community-based Literacy and Basic Skills agencies.



Each service coordination partnership showcased in this newsletter is unique; and they all have strategies that help make them successful. Some common themes presented throughout all the stories are innovation, community connection, commitment, transparency and mutual respect.

Dina McGowan, Executive Director at Tri-County Literacy Council and First Stop in Cornwall, shares the following suggestions when building partnerships around a service coordination model, such as their centralized assessment centre:

- ⇒ Make sure all partners are on board
- ⇒ Design formal agreements
- ⇒ Keep communication lines open
- ⇒ Don't go forward if you have any doubts

Jan Goatcher, Coordinator of the John Howard Society's Skills Plus LBS program in Ottawa says it's important to partner with an agency that believes your literacy services are going to be useful. *"If they're not advocating the program for you and with you, then it's not going to work,"* says Jan.

When starting a partnership, it's important to be realistic, but to also remain open and flexible in the direction it takes. Sometimes the original plan doesn't work the way it was envisioned, but that doesn't mean some good can't come out of it, most stakeholders agree.

"Joyce Bigelow, Executive Director of Northern Connections, notes *"Partnerships help the community and the programs. Not every partnership is going to fully work out, but even if it works partly, you've increased awareness that much."*