

Our Voice

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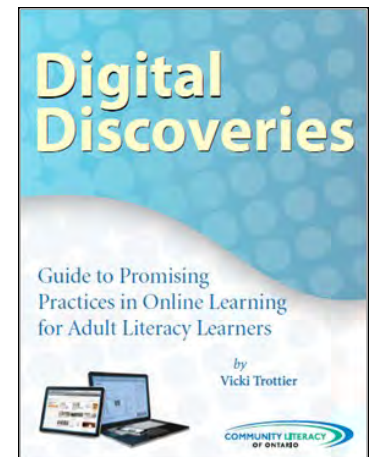
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Announcing Digital Discoveries

In January 2012, Community Literacy of Ontario will release our newest resource: *Digital Discoveries: Guide to Promising Practices in Online Learning for Adult Literacy Learners*.

Do you want to enhance online learning for your students? Are you looking for new digital technologies and resources? Then *Digital Discoveries* is for you!



Digital Discoveries provides an extensive overview of promising practices and instructional strategies for online learning with adult literacy learners. These strategies were gathered during research with both literacy providers and adult students from all across Ontario.

Digital Discoveries also overviews popular digital learning technologies (including blogs, social networking, instructional websites and more). Lastly, *Digital Discoveries* includes an extensive annotated list of popular and useful digital learning resources.

CLO will send a complimentary printed copy of *Digital Discoveries* to all MTCU-funded community-based literacy agencies, all Ontario literacy networks and MTCU. Other organizations can purchase this practical and innovative resource for \$25, plus postage. To order, please email clo@bellnet.ca

As well, in October 2011, CLO sent a complimentary printed copy of our *Guide to Effective Technologies for Providing Online Staff Training* to community-based literacy agencies and literacy networks. There was an extremely high level of interest in this resource from external sources. In fact, an incredible **46,000 copies** of CLO's guide were downloaded in just a six-week period!

Printed copies of CLO's *Guide to Effective Technologies* can be purchased for \$15, plus postage, by emailing clo@bellnet.ca



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Midland Area Reading Council - Social Enterprise Success

By Sue Bannon

At the Midland Area Reading Council (MARC), the constant need to raise funds to keep doors open and programs running weighs heavily on our minds.

Although we live in an extremely generous community, donations and grants aren't guaranteed. So what is the solution? At MARC we decided to look at social enterprise as a continual source of income.



We were already receiving calls from those in the community who did not need to upgrade their literacy skills, but who just wanted local, affordable computer training. A staff member, who was facing a cut in hours, put together a few paid computer classes. People registered and New Skills North Simcoe (NSNS), a fee-for-service computer upgrading program, and our first social enterprise project, was launched.

We were fortunate to receive funding through Laubach Literacy Ontario as a result of a grant they received from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to support social enterprise projects. The North Simcoe Community Futures Development Corporation supported the program through the purchase of 13 computers.

In the past year, NSNS has offered nine courses for businesses, including an insurance company and an industrial manufacturer. These businesses covered the cost for their clients and employees to upgrade their computer skills so they could increase their employability and workplace skills. NSNS has also offered 14 workshops for individuals including a very popular Facebook 101, Introduction to the Internet and Introduction to Excel. All the money earned through NSNS has been directed back to supporting our free, community-based literacy programs.

As with any new business, you have to promote your product to potential customers. As a charitable organization we have a limited advertising budget and we have tried to use as many free or nearly free advertising opportunities as possible.

We have promoted the workshops through press releases, sponsored advertisements in a local newspaper, our two Facebook pages (one for MARC and one for NSNS), our website, our quarterly newsletter, email blasts, and a brochure. We also set up a booth at the local Chamber of Commerce's annual tradeshow.

The winter 2012 brochure, available on our website at www.nald.ca/marc, lists a variety of introductory and intermediate computer classes. We are also planning on offering a computer camp during the March break for kids between the ages of eight and twelve.

New Skills North Simcoe is continuing to expand the existing selection of courses and is making contact with businesses to offer customized training for their employees at competitive prices. In addition to computer courses, NSNS is looking to expand its offerings with a computer repair and maintenance program.

MARC also has another social enterprise project – a used book store. This store is staffed by volunteers and the inventory is all donated books. For the first year, we rented a small store front, but unfortunately there was little walk-by traffic and all proceeds were going directly to pay the landlord and the phone bill.

This September, we rearranged our administrative offices to make room for the store. Although our office is a little tighter on space now, all the money we bring in is pure profit for the organization. Sales have dropped, but this was not unexpected because the tourists have gone home for the season and our location is even more hidden than before. Because we have a smaller location and little storage room, we have to be selective in what books we accept; however, there is never a shortage of donations. We are looking for a more affordable and more visible location and hope to re-locate the store to the downtown core in spring or summer of 2012.



Our social enterprise ideas are still flowing, and in the upcoming year we will be offering fee-for-service tutoring for children and youth. Future plans include clear writing services, financial literacy workshops, English as a second language programs and educational workshops to the community.

For more information on what programs we offer, please go to: www.nald.ca/marc and click on New Skills North Simcoe.

Helpful Websites on Social Enterprise

- ◆ BC Centre for Social Enterprise: www.centreforsocialenterprise.com
- ◆ Social Enterprise Council of Canada / Enterprising Non-Profits: www.enterprisingnonprofits.ca
- ◆ The Canadian Social Entrepreneurship Foundation: www.csef.ca/
- ◆ Toronto Enterprise Fund: www.torontoenterprisefund.ca
- ◆ Collaborative for Innovative Social Enterprise Development: <http://cised.ca>
- ◆ Trillium Foundation: www.trilliumfoundation.org/en/knowledgeSharingCentre/resources/SocialEnterprise.pdf

Strategies for Sharing OALCF Information with Employment Services and Other Community Partners

At our November 2011 AGM and Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) Fall Implementation training, Community Literacy of Ontario circulated a survey about sharing OALCF information with Employment Ontario partners. Practitioners from 22 community-based literacy agencies responded.

Many creative activities are occurring to promote the OALCF within the Employment Ontario delivery network and to other community stakeholders. However, agencies are limited by capacity constraints in what they can do. Agencies also are looking to MTCU, given its more extensive resources and authority, to help promote the OALCF. The survey results are summarized below.

Currently, here are some of the ways in which community-based LBS agencies are sharing information with their Employment Ontario partners about the OALCF

- ⇒ Preparing a written overview of agency activities, including basic information on the OALCF
- ⇒ Holding face-to-face meetings with Employment Service (ES) agencies and other community partners
- ⇒ Holding mini workshops for ES partners on Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) and the OALCF and what this means for their clients
- ⇒ Sending informational emails to ES staff, Ontario Works (OW) caseworkers and other community stakeholders
- ⇒ Linking with their regional and sectoral networks to share information with the Employment Ontario (EO) partners
- ⇒ Building formal and informal networks of various partners who deliver training, social and employment services in our communities
- ⇒ Inviting Employment Service agencies to Literacy Service Planning meetings
- ⇒ Making strategic one-to-one connections with ES, OW and other community stakeholders
- ⇒ Making personalized connections with ES staff
- ⇒ Talking to ES staff and finding out what their needs are and how we can help them
- ⇒ Getting involved in community partnerships that include LBS and ES agencies
- ⇒ Hosting community meetings and agency open houses where a variety of information is shared, including information about the OALCF
- ⇒ Maintaining an active and constant presence in our community
- ⇒ Participating in monthly LBS/ES agency networking and sharing lunches
- ⇒ Inviting ES staff to visit our agency and going to their agencies to learn first-hand about each other's needs
- ⇒ Writing articles in our newsletter or on our website about the OALCF and sharing these with all community partners, including ES
- ⇒ Having several staff people from ES agencies serve on the Board of Directors of our agency
- ⇒ Making personal telephone calls to ES agencies about LBS and OALFC developments
- ⇒ Holding monthly employment and training committee meetings made up of LBS, ES and OW staff
- ⇒ Inviting ES agencies to our regional network meetings where they can learn firsthand about the OALCF
- ⇒ Holding quarterly meetings with LBS/ES providers and our Employment and Training Consultants (ETCs)



In the future, here are some of the ways in which community-based LBS agencies would like to share OALCF information with their Employment Ontario partners

Once again, LBS agencies identified many helpful and creative strategies for promoting the OALCF to Employment Service agencies in the future. However, agencies are facing capacity constraints in what they are able to do. With additional resources, LBS agencies could more actively promote LBS and the OALCF to Employment Service providers, OW caseworkers and other community partners.



In addition, LBS agencies hope that MTCU would have a strong role in future promotional activities by creating (or funding) common training tools and common OALCF promotional materials suitable for print-based, web-based and social media use. Agencies also noted the OALCF promotion would be easier once the provincial training was complete and once all OALCF tools are finalized and released.

- ⇒ Developing common, SIMPLIFIED, print-based materials about the OALCF to share with Employment Service agencies and other community stakeholders
- ⇒ Developing common, SIMPLIFIED, PowerPoint presentations about the OALCF to delivery presentations to various community stakeholders
- ⇒ Initiating a networking group of all LBS, Employment Services, OW caseworkers, and other community partners with an interest in training and employment
- ⇒ Holding community presentations where OALCF highlights would be shared
- ⇒ Presenting information on the OALCF at their AGM
- ⇒ Developing an online training module for ES staff to learn about the OALCF
- ⇒ Participating in common training events and conferences with our EO partners
- ⇒ Developing common provincial OALCF marketing tools and resources
- ⇒ Engaging in inter-service networking meetings with service providers
- ⇒ Updating their websites with OALCF information
- ⇒ Developing social media tools and strategies to promote LBS and the OALCF
- ⇒ Inviting our ES partners to visit our agencies to learn first-hand what we do
- ⇒ Holding a “brown bag” lunch networking session for all LBS/ES service providers
- ⇒ Holding joint meetings of our LSP with the equivalent group for Employment Services
- ⇒ Having MTCU encourage Employment Service agencies to learn about and understand the importance of literacy and the need to partner and work together with LBS
- ⇒ Researching and writing a joint newsletter by ALL community Employment Ontario providers (both LBS and Employment Services). This newsletter could focus on “what’s new?” in various agencies. It could be local, regional or provincial in scope.
- ⇒ Creating a blog to communicate about LBS and the OALCF with various community partners
- ⇒ Posting information about LBS and the OALCF on our agency’s Facebook page
- ⇒ Working on more joint LBS/ES partnership initiatives would help ES to understand the OALCF
- ⇒ Doing in-service presentations about the OALCF to ES staff and OW caseworkers
- ⇒ Presenting information on the OALCF to the membership of our local employment network, which includes all EO partners and other stakeholders
- ⇒ Updating flyers/brochures about LBS and the OALCF and sharing them with ES staff and OW caseworkers
- ⇒ Continuing a wide variety of ongoing networking strategies – face-to-face meetings, program visits, networking lunches, regular telephone connection, sharing newsletters, brochures, websites, etc.

Health Literacy in North Bay

By Julie Patterson, Literacy & Health Project Manager

Literacy and health go hand in hand. It's been well documented that health and literacy are interdependent (Perrin; Rootman and Ronson).

Imagine making a life and death decision but being *"unable to remember and no printed information was given."* Imagine knowing that *"they look at you differently if you tell them that you can't read."* Imagine being *"afraid to feel stupid when I tell the doctor what is wrong."* Low literacy skills are invisible, humiliating and debilitating.



Literacy practitioners have always recognized that over time their student's health appeared to improve. In 2007, the North Bay Literacy Council was involved in the research study, "Factors Affecting Success." There were three questions addressing health. Those questions provided the impetus for three Health Literacy Ontario Trillium grants.

There have been many opportunities to educate and raise awareness for the general public, literacy students and the health care providers. Establishing Steering Committees for each project comprised of literacy practitioners, students, and representatives from health care and education, provided the project with guidance, expert advice and opened many doors.

The opening of doors has been a process. An environmental scan of low literacy learners and health care providers demonstrated a need to raise awareness and provide education. After gathering resources for tutors and the health care community, many initiatives were begun. Health literacy is now part of the tutor training workshop for volunteer tutors. Supplementary, more in-depth health literacy training workshops are also offered to our practitioners. In the workshop, a hands-on approach is used to have practitioners develop a lesson plan using on-line health resources.

Presentations about levels of low health literacy and strategies for intervention were made to health care and literacy agencies. Tutors were trained to use health information to teach literacy skills, and brochures were created and sent to health care providers and libraries. The presentations were well received and helped raise awareness of both the issues around low health literacy and the services available at the Literacy Council. Mailing out information to health care providers about the project proved to be less successful.

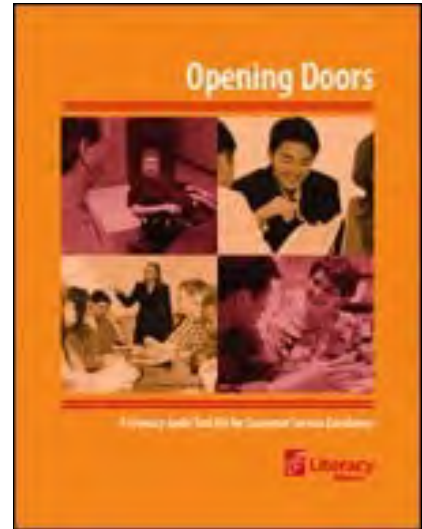
As awareness of the Health Literacy Project increased so did opportunities. The North Bay Regional Health Centre has now established a Health Literacy Committee. They understand that Health Literacy is both a health and safety issue as well as an ethical issue. For the first time, the hospital has hired a full-time Health Librarian to act as a resource for staff. They are presently looking at establishing a pilot to use the "Teach Back" method and are investigating developing a Health Literacy policy.

The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit requested a presentation for staff about the services provided by the Literacy Council and the impact of low health literacy. Subsequently, they are now partnering to create a brochure with the Literacy Council and the BScN students at Nipissing University.

Nipissing University has placed four, third-year BScN students for placement at the Literacy Council. The nursing students have presented short health literacy workshops to some of the Literacy Council students. They have also created a short video on the Teach Back method that will be used for in-service education for the hospital and the health unit.

A major campaign was mounted to encourage the general public to ask questions of their health care provider and therefore take a more active role in their health care. The Chief of Staff of the hospital and the Medical Officer of Health were on hand to help launch the well researched “Ask Me 3” initiative. Posters, pamphlets and note pads were distributed to all health care providers in North Bay. “Ask Me 3” has been part of presentation to health care agencies and nursing students at Nipissing University.

A Health Literacy audit was conducted at the Northeast Mental Health Centre and the North Bay General Hospital prior to their amalgamation. It served to raise awareness of opportunities for a change in practice and policy. The audit results were instrumental in the creation of a Health Literacy Committee. Literacy Alberta created the Health Literacy Audit and the audit can be ordered at: <http://literacyalberta.ca/item/opening-doors-literacy-audit-tool-kit-customer-service-excellence>



In August 2011, a Health Literacy Symposium was held in North Bay. Presenters were international, national and local experts in their field of health and literacy. Eighty health care providers and literacy practitioners attended. The new North Bay Regional Health Centre housed the symposium and provided support. The local cable company filmed the Symposium and is broadcasting it across the region in three segments.

Nipissing University School of Nursing has now incorporated health literacy into their curriculum. Health Literacy is part of their Ethics Module and it is introduced again in Care of the Complex Patient.

Lessons Learned

In order to create an ongoing impact we found that:

- ⇒ It took several attempts, various delivery methods and a variety of invested professionals to create ongoing changes.
- ⇒ It is helpful to have a person with administrative authority to be a champion of the project and idea.
- ⇒ Communities need a permanent health literacy manager for ongoing coordination of projects and to maintain links with literacy groups.



Like any project there were successes and failures. However, there was never a time when there was not a challenging opportunity. To be inspired by the challenge and have the opportunity to inspire others is very satisfying and rewarding. More Health Literacy information can be viewed at the North Bay Literacy Council website: <http://northbayliteracycouncil.ca/literacy-health>

“Getting an idea should be like sitting down on a pin: it should make you jump up and do something.” E.L. Simpson

Social Media and Literacy CLO's Fireside Chat on Facebook



CLO's "Instructor Week" on Facebook was very successful (and a lot of fun besides), so now we are eager to try a new topic!

Would you like to learn and share about how Facebook and other social media tools can be effectively used in literacy programs to teach learners, promote your agency or interact with supporters?

If your answer is "yes", then come and join Community Literacy of Ontario for our very first "**Fireside Chat on Facebook**." This event will be hosted on CLO's Facebook page by literacy instructor and CLO board member, **Keith Harford**. Once again, we will be using Facebook's FORUM feature (a threaded discussion group).

Keith (with the support of Ollie Owl) will host several guests who will share their insights on effective uses of Facebook and other social media tools for learning, promotion and stakeholder engagement. We've picked the coldest part of the winter to host our first warm and toasty "Fireside Chat": **January 17 to 26, 2011**.

CLO will be holding our "**Fireside Chat on Facebook**" using the **FORUM** feature on our Facebook page. Forum is a threaded print-based discussion board. You can view this discussion whether or not you are a Facebook user. However, you can only comment if you have a Facebook account and have "liked" CLO's page. Come on over to: www.facebook.com/CommunityLiteracyOntario

We have invited Mark Zuckerberg himself to participate – though we can't guarantee he will attend!

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