

# Western Québec Literacy Council

Annual Report  
2007 -2008

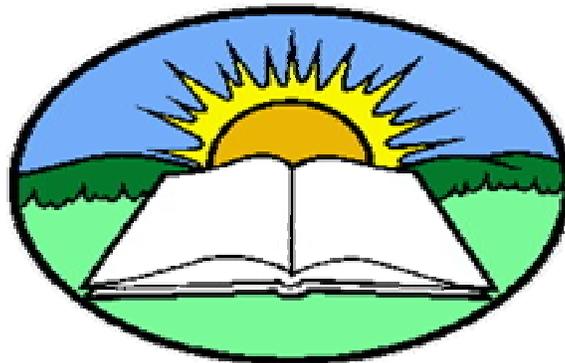
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## Western Québec Literacy Council 2007—2008 Annual Report



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

Greetings and welcome to our 24th Annual General Meeting,

I think we are changing the world. Our dedication and commitment is evident in the fact that in 2008 very few Canadians are illiterate. Most Canadians can read.

However, there are still a large number of Canadians who do not read well enough for “full engagement at work, at home and in the community<sup>1</sup>.” Reading is a very complicated skill, and like a sport, it takes training to keep it sharp. Every day our literacy skills are put to the test. If we are shopping in a grocery store we must be able to read product codes and “best before” dates in case of food safety recalls. If we are purchasing a cell phone we must be vigilant in reading the small print or we may spend many hundreds of dollars more than we budgeted. If we are making a lunch for our child to bring to school we must be aware of nut allergies and the chemicals in the juice containers and water bottles.

In a few weeks we will be called upon to choose a government to run our country. When our reading skills are dull it is impossible to make an informed choice. As Canadians we all pay a terrible price when so many don’t have the ability to make an informed decision. So, our work is not done.

I want to thank you all for your commitment and continued support to literacy. In particular I would like to thank Jennifer, Julie, Line, Michel, Norma, and Shirley, our Board of Directors. I also want to offer thanks and gratitude to Marilee and Debbie for reminding us of our commitments, and making the office welcoming and efficient.

Peace,  
Leila

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<sup>1</sup> ABC Canada web site

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## Who we are

**The vision** of the Western Québec Literacy Council is to help and encourage members of our community to develop the skills needed for life-long learning.

**The mission** of the Western Québec Literacy Council is to help English-speaking adults, families, and youth improve their reading, writing, listening, speaking, numeracy and other life skills through programs adapted to the needs of the individual. As a charitable volunteer organization, Western Québec Literacy Council recruits and trains committed volunteers as tutors and support personnel. We are dedicated to promoting community awareness with sensitivity throughout the region of West Québec.

The Western Québec Literacy Council (WQLC) is a charitable organization that offers free individual lessons in reading, writing and mathematics. Volunteers are trained to tutor one other English-speaking adult with the goal of improving literacy skills. We recruit students and tutors in the region of West Québec -from Chapeau to Gatineau to Buckingham to Maniwaki and points in between. WQLC was formed in 1984 in association with the Western Québec School Board. Since 1992 WQLC has functioned as an independent, community-based, charitable, volunteer organization.

## 2007-2008 Board of Directors

Michel Chabot, Quyon	Vice-Chair
Norma DesRosiers, Luskville	Secretary
Shirley Gauthier, Norway Bay	Treasurer
Line Lafontaine, Quyon	Member
Leila Nulty-Senf, Greermount	Chair
Julie Sicard, Ft. Coulonge	Student Rep.
Jennifer Weese, Ft. Coulonge	Member

## Tutor Trainers

Beryl Kerrison, Cantley  
Line Lafontaine, Quyon  
Carol Pritchard, Aylmer

## Staff

Marilee DeLombard,  
Executive Director  
Debbie Gauthier,  
Office Assistant



Thanks!

Western Quebec Literacy Council wishes to thank all our volunteers for taking time from their busy lives to help WQLC carry out its work. You provide valuable help, support, guidance and inspiration!

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EACH ONE TEACH ONE

- Student-tutor teams are the heart of Western Québec Literacy Council (WQLC). A person who wants to improve his or her literacy skills is teamed with a volunteer tutor for free weekly lessons.
- Following an initial assessment, the student and tutor develop the student's learning plan with help from the Executive Director. The student's hobbies and interests suggest additional reading and writing material which maintains interest in the lessons.
- Text books are supplied by WQLC and second-hand computers are supplied to students who want to use them.
- During the year 26 adults asked about help with their reading, writing and math skills. They are located throughout West Quebec - in such places as Fort Coulonge, Shawville, Luskville, and Gatineau.
- Western Quebec Literacy Council (WQLC) delivers services to English-speakers in the Outaouais. This area includes the cities of Buckingham and Gatineau, the villages in the Gatineau Valley and the Ottawa Valley, and the rural areas in between. Our bank of

trained volunteer tutors throughout the region await a request to tutor in their community.

GROUP LEARNING

- Students also have the opportunity to learn in group settings. WQLC's student group, TREE (Teamwork to Raise Education and Equality) organizes activities for students to learn in the wider world.
- The TREE group organized a bus trip for June 28. Sixteen students, volunteers and families enjoyed guided tours of The Canada Science and Technology Museum and the Agriculture Museum in Ottawa. In spite of the rain, a good time was had by all. Thanks to volunteer Jenn Weese, who helped the team organize the day.



Tom experiments at Science & Technology Museum

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### GROUP LEARNING (continued)

- For the second year the student group organized a trip to the Renfrew Bowldrome. Eleven people participated and went for pizza after.

- Further learning opportunities are offered in organizing and running the student group itself. Students organized three TREE meetings this year.

- The Happy Rockers curling group is another group-learning opportunity. The curlers meet for weekly games from October to April. Improvement is seen in physical and mental coordination, as well as in social skills. The team has been embraced by the curling club community who waive ice fees for the year. The Happy Rocker curlers were celebrated at a banquet on April 19 at Smittys Restaurant where they received trophies and lapel pins from WQLC. Each year the winning team (Red or Blue) is presented with a large trophy compliments of Bob Smith. Bob has also provided the banquet for the past two years. This year contributions were also accepted. Many thanks to the curling volunteers and to Bob, who has agreed to be coach for 2008-9 season.

- Workshops are offered on topics that students request. This year Kate Aley presented a workshop in drawing on May 28, 2008. New talents were discovered at the workshop as students developed their skills.



- A workshop, "Introduction to computers for students", was presented on February 20 by tutor, Peter Gauthier.

- Students interested in cooking participated in the "Eating Well" workshop presented by Arleen Prost on March 15, 2008. Students learned about meal planning as well as food preparation - and food enjoyment - at this workshop.

- Students and tutors received WQLC pocket agendas for 2008 to encourage keeping track of their schedules and to encourage communication with the council.

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### TRAINING

- Both students and tutors benefited from attending workshops offered at the annual Literacy Volunteers of Québec (LVQ) conference on Nov. 2, 2007. Workshops included: Introduction to Brain Gym® (physical and mental exercises to increase learning), Experience Science, Phobias are Easy to Treat, Living On A Shoestring Budget, Tutor Exchange, and Literacy Essential Skills in the Workplace. The guest speaker, former literacy student, Dorothy Silver, gave a speech that encouraged literacy students and inspired volunteers to continue helping adults to improve their reading and writing skills.

- In cooperation with the Maniwaki Adult Education and Training Centre a basic tutor training workshop was held in Maniwaki in the fall of 2007. WQLC Tutor Trainer, Beryl Kerrison, and guest Tutor Trainer, Danielle Hay from Laurentian Literacy Council in Lachute, presented the workshop on September 28-29. The third session on October 27 was presented by Beryl Kerrison and Marilee DeLombard. Six new tutors completed the training course. They make up the first WQLC tutor bank in this area.



Julie in Brain Gym workshop



Danielle



Lynn & Fran



Beryl



Rose, Beth & Kate (missing Shirley)

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### TRAINING (continued)

- WQLC volunteers and staff attended training sessions offered by Literacy Volunteers of Québec (LVQ) and Québec English Literacy Alliance (QELA). This year topics included:
  - "Bridging the Gap" (Initial and on-going learner evaluation)
  - "Reception & Referral" (Sensitizing social services agencies to recognize and refer literacy students)
  - "SARCA" ("Life long learning" for all)
  - "Working Collaboratively with Google Groups" & "Skype" (The internet as a communications tool)
  - "Learning Links" (On-line learning sources)
  - "Alpha-Route On-line Learning Website"
  - "Personal Portfolios" & "E-pearl" (On-line learning tools)
  - "Reading Companion" (Computerized reading assistant)
  - "Technology in the Classroom" (Integrating technology as learning tool)
  - On-line discussion group: "Technology 101"
- "Open Office for Microsoft Word Users" was offered to WQLC volunteers on June 26 by Peter Gauthier, WQLC tutor.

- "Learning Difficulties", a workshop based on material developed by the Quebec Ministry of Education was presented to tutors on June 25 by Marilee DeLombard.

### NETWORKING

- WQLC keeps up with changes in the field of literacy by networking at the provincial level with Literacy Volunteers of Quebec (LVQ). Working at the provincial level allows us to tackle large issues with a province-wide group of literacy practitioners who have similar concerns. LVQ is currently conducting strategic planning.
- WQLC also networks at the regional and national levels. We belong to the Ottawa Coalition for Literacy which organizes professional development workshops and refers students and tutors to us. We are also a member of Quebec Literacy Alliance, Literacy Foundation (Fondation pour l'alphabétisation), Movement for Canadian Literacy, and ABC Canada.

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### NETWORKING (continued)

- This year co-operation between W.Q.Literacy Council and W.Q.School Board took the form of developing the Reading Buddies program at the St. John's elementary school in Campbell's Bay. Many of the trained volunteers were adult education students who received credit toward their courses for the participation in the program. Volunteer training for the Reading Buddies was carried out in conjunction with Family Literacy Day by WQLC Executive Director, Marilee DeLombard.

- WQLC participated in Family Literacy Day celebrations at St. John's School. Students dramatized their favourite stories. These plays were shared with three other schools through the video conference equipment of the Community Learning Centre. WQLC and other partners read books to the all the schools in the teleconference.

- Other community groups with whom we cooperated during the year include the Regional Association of West Quebecers, Pontiac Community Development Corporation, and the Pontiac Community Learning Centre.

### OUTREACH

- WQLC appeared at regional expositions organized by Quebec Learners' Week. WQLC information kiosks were presented in Aylmer, Fort Coulonge and Maniwaki during Quebec Learners' Week, April 1-5, 2008. Michel Chabot, WQLC Vice-President sits on the regional organizing committee for Quebec Learners' Week.



- [www.wq-literacy.org](http://www.wq-literacy.org), our new, user-friendly website has proven to be a boon to getting our services known in the community of West Quebec. Our new site host, Richard Wegner, did a great job of taking our information and making it easy and pleasant to find. Thanks to Yamaska Literacy Council for sharing some helpful and creative web site ideas. Along with the website we also have a new email address: [info@wq-literacy.org](mailto:info@wq-literacy.org).

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### OUTREACH (continued)

- The WQLC Christmas Open-house on December 8th was well attended by WQLC volunteers, students and families, and members of the wider community. Treats were eaten and books and stories were exchanged.
- WQLC volunteers and staff participated in making a digital video to sensitize the public to the realities of life with low literacy skills and the existence of programs such as ours that can help people make the necessary changes. The video production is a project of Literacy Volunteers of Quebec and will include segments from each of the eleven member councils. We will be able to personalize the video for our own use. The video will debut at the LVQ annual conference on October 25, 2008.
- This year a new contract position of Outreach Consultant was created to help WQLC increase our presence throughout our territory. Nancy Hunt, formerly with the Pontiac Journal, is using old and new methods of reaching our target of English-speakers in West Quebec. Contact her through the WQLC office to plan a visit for your community group.

- Public awareness activities, such as newspaper articles and advertising and the information booth at the Shawville Fair, help us to reach new students and volunteer tutors. WQLC now has a listing with "Je Benevole", an Outaouais regional volunteer recruitment website.

### COMMUNICATIONS

- Students, tutors, staff, and other volunteers keep in touch by telephone, mail, email and face-to-face meetings.
- Communication with WQLC has also been improved by the introduction of a toll free telephone number which will allow people from all parts of the region to contact us without cost. The number has only is different from our regular telephone number by only 2 digits: 1-888-647-3112 / 819-647-3112.
- WQLC's newsletter, LI NCs (Literacy Information Network in our Communities) is written and distributed four times per year to a mailing list of 230. Articles that appear in the newsletter include tutor tips, pictures of council activities, coming events and short readings for students.

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### ORGANIZATION

- Western Québec Literacy Council operates under the guidance of a board of Directors made up of seven volunteer members including one student representative. The Board deals with matters of planning, governance, financial and human resource management, and special project support. The Board met eight times during the July 1- June 30, 2007-8 fiscal year.

- WQLC staff consists of an Executive Director, Marilee DeLombard and an Office Assistant, Deborah Gauthier. Nancy Hunt, Outreach Consultant, works on a contract basis.

- The accounting firm Porter, Smith, Héту was hired to perform the annual "mission d'examen".

- Notable changes took place this year in the office in Shawville. Minor renovations resulted in a private student-tutor study room. The new photocopier/printer is now networked with all the office computers and office computer hardware and software were updated (Windows XP).

- WQLC program development also carried on apace. The WQLC training committee researched and developed a new tutor training curriculum. The new approach will premier at the Fall 2008 tutor training workshop, October 17-18.



Working on the new tutor training workshop—  
Carol, Marilee & Beryl

- A new strategic planning process was started by the WQLC board of directors in February, 2008 with a review of our recent history and an examination of current trends. More in-depth "visioning" was begun in the summer and will continue through the end of the year. Ideas for WQLC's future direction are solicited from WQLC members, as well as from members of the broader population of West Quebec.

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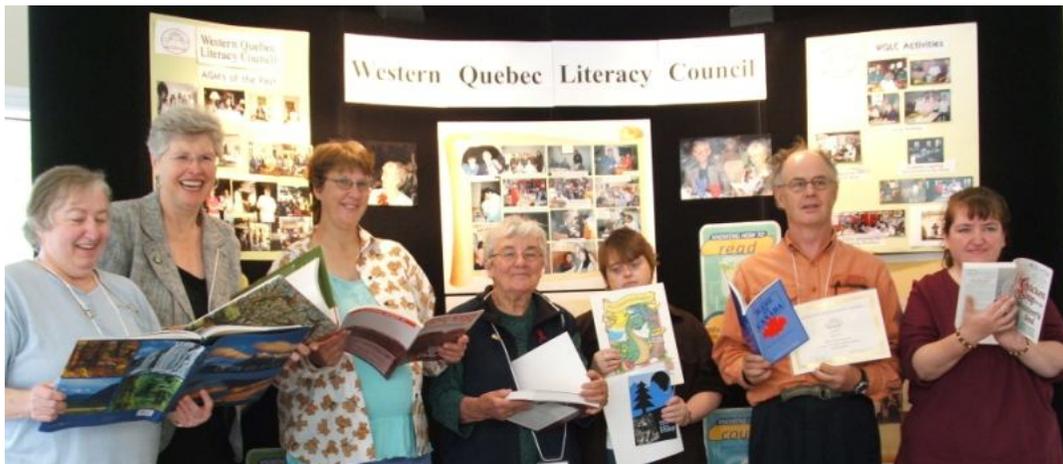
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### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING CONFERENCE 2007

- Our 23rd Annual General Meeting was held on September 22, 2007 at the Norway Bay Golf Course in Norway Bay, Quebec. Twenty seven students, tutors and volunteers attended. Members of the Board were re-elected. Julie Sicard was elected to sit on the Board of Directors as Student Representative. Reports were approved: Mission d'examen 2006-7, Activity Report 2006-7, Action Plan 2007-8, Budget 2007-8, hiring accountant 2007-8.

Three members of the Wakefield Grannies presented a slide show of their activities supporting African grandmothers who are raising children who have become orphans because of AIDS. Leila NultySenf lead a hands-on workshop in making artist trading cards. We cut, pasted, wrote and drew on 3.5"X2.5" cards to make tiny works of art to be traded with other art card artists.

Awards were given to students for milestones in personal achievement and to volunteers for their exceptional contributions over the year. Special recognition was given to Norma Geggie, founding member and Past-President of WQLC as well as founding member of the Wakefield Grannies.



Smiling award recipients: L-R; Shirley, Norma D., Sue, Norma G. , Lisa, Tom, Julie.

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### TUTORS ACTIVE IN 2007-2008

- Kate Aley, Luskville
- Venetia Crawford, Shawville
- Donna Gagnon, Chapeau
- Craig Gaston, Aylmer
- Deborah Gauthier, Otter Lake
- Peter Gauthier, Shawville
- Shirley Gauthier, Norway Bay
- John Grant, Shawville
- Beryl Kerrison, Cantley
- Nicole Kouri, Gatineau
- Christine Larin, Aylmer
- Carol Pritchard, Aylmer
- Julie Sicard, Fort Coulonge
- Cathy Welsh, Bryson
- Jennifer Weese, Fort Coulonge
- Robert Wills, Thorne

### TUTORS TRAINED I N 2007-2008

Fall 2007

- Rose Commanda, Maniwaki
- Fran Denis, Maniwaki
- Lynn Harris, Bouchette
- Beth Mulville, Bouchette
- Shirley Tolley, Maniwaki
- Kate Webster, Maniwaki



### WQLC AGM 2007



Making art cards



Marilynn,  
Cathy,  
Kate,  
Jane,  
Weibke,  
Peter



Jane & Esther



Wakefield Grannies:  
Micheline,  
Norma,  
Mercedes

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2007-8 TREE Museum Tour group



Meeting King



TREE meeting



Sicard sisters at holiday party



Sue, Owen & Leila



Curling action



Harry & Robert

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## Supporters

The Council would also like to say “thank you” for the support we received through donations and service in kind from:

- Kate Aley, Luskville
- Lorianne Bertrand, St. John’s School, Campbell’s Bay
- Michel Chabot, Bristol
- Marilee DeLombar d
- Norma DesRosiers
- The Equity, Shawville
- Anne-Chantale Fontaine, Sutton
- Clarence Leach, Quyon
- Marie Doyle, Fort Coulonge
- Marilyn Fox, Shawville
- Tom Fox, Shawville
- Debbie Gauthier, Otter Lake
- Peter Gauthier, Shawville
- Shirley Gauthier, Norway Bay
- Norma Geggie, Wakefield
- Danielle Hay, Lachute
- Beryl & Harry Kerrison, Cantley
- Line Lafontaine, Bristol
- Christine Larin, Access Volunteer Action Centre, Aylmer
- Leila Nulty-Senf, Greer mount
- Pontiac Journal, Mansfield
- Arleen Prost, Ladysmith
- Lenny Prost, Ladysmith
- Radio Pontiac, Mansfield
- Carol Pritchard, Aylmer
- Quebec English Literacy Alliance
- Barb Racine, Shawville
- Bonnie Richardson, Community Learning Centre
- Micheline Sabourin, Wakefield
- Terril & Renee Scott, Aylmer
- Julie Sicard, Fort Coulonge
- Sue Stewart, Renfrew
- Bob Smith, Shawville
- Joani Tannenbaum, Literacy Volunteers of Quebec
- Mary Teevens, Shawville
- Mercedes Telles, Wakefield
- Mary R. Tessier, Aylmer
- Pierre Thibault, Bristol
- Terry van Erp, Low
- Bruce Walsh, Clarendon
- Cathy Welsh, Bryson
- Jennifer Weese, Fort Coulonge
- West Quebec Post, Aylmer
- Bruce Walsh, Clarendon
- Richard Wegner, Bristol
- Robert Wills, Thorne
- W.Q.School Board, Adult Education

The Western Québec Literacy Council would like to thank The Québec Ministry of Education, Sports and Leisure; and individual donors for their financial support.