



Mission Literacy In Motion



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## Introduction

British Columbia's Boards of Education are required, by legislation, to prepare and submit to the Minister of Education a Community Literacy Plan with respect to improving the literacy of all citizens within the District and any other matters ordered by the Minister. Community Literacy Plans are multi-year, annually updated, plans submitted to the Minister by July 15<sup>th</sup> each year.

Community Literacy Organizations in receipt of Decoda Literacy Solutions funding are required to submit a report once a year. Mission Literacy In Motion's report is due each May.

This document is intended to serve the reporting requirements of Mission Public Schools and Mission Literacy In Motion in regards to literacy work. We believe it illustrates our effective partnership and collaboration which makes our work richer.



## Reflections on the Current Year

### Task group

#### Membership in the task group

Mission Literacy in Motion (MLiM) consists of a broad representation of community perspectives through a variety of associations. Membership includes:

- Centennial Place Clubhouse
- Decoda Literacy Solutions
- District of Mission
- Early Childhood Development Committee
- First Book Canada
- Fraser Health
- Friends of the Mission Library
- Future 4 Nations Aboriginal Head Start
- Institute for Cross-Cultural Exchange
- Leq' a:mel First Nation
- Ministry of Advanced Education
- Mission Community Services
- Mission Friendship Centre
- Mission Public Library
- Mamele'awt Qweesome/To'o Housing Society
- Mission Public Schools
- Postmedia Raise-a-Reader
- *Siwal Si'wes Advisory Committee*
- Stó:lō Nation, Aboriginal Family Place
- Success by 6
- United Way of the Fraser Valley
- University of the Fraser Valley
- WorkBC

MLiM Board members sit on a broad selection of service groups and agencies through the Mission Community.

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

As a literacy-based nonprofit organization, Mission Literacy in Motion (MLiM) has been active in the community for twenty-two years. MLiM has undergone growth, change and restructuring that resulted in the following new Mission Statement: "Mission Literacy in Motion will empower people by making connections."

Mission Literacy in Motion is organized through a voluntary committee, an elected board, two Literacy Outreach Coordinators (LOC), and various Program Facilitators.

MLiM's Board Members and LOC, sit on a broad selection of service groups and agency committees.



### Community context:

Mission Public Schools serves a population of 36,426 (census 2011) community members. Approximately 6% of the families are non-English speaking and 8.1% are Aboriginal. In the Mission School District 66, 1% of our families have children at home and 17.5% of these are single parent families.

Mission Public Schools and its Board of Education acknowledges and honours that our school district lies within Stó:lō Territory, specifically the traditional territories of the following First Nation Communities: Leq' a:mel First Nation; Kwantlen First Nation; Matsqui First Nation; Scowlitz First Nation.

### Community Development and Literacy Collaboration:

A significant literacy collaboration is the relationship between Mission Public School District (MPSD) and Mission Literacy in Motion (MLiM).

Literacy programming such as: the Homework Club, Book Buddies, Riot of Reading, Family Day Celebrations; as well as our office space, technical support and classrooms are supported through an in-kind agreement with MPSD. This agreement includes an on-site meeting space at various schools that includes access to equipment, Internet access, supplies, library, gymnasium, and other items.

Members of MPSD and UFV teachers sit on the MLiM Board. UFV provides the post-secondary partnership required by the provincial government for the CALP (Community Adult Literacy Program) grant. The Mission Healthy Community Council is another collaborator.

Mission Public Library houses and provides in-kind materials, publications and staff support for the Reading Buddies Program. Other groups that collaborate with us are:

- Centennial Place clubhouse
- Decoda Literacy Solutions
- District of Mission
- Early Childhood Development Committee
- First Book Canada
- Fraser Health
- Friends of the Library
- Future 4 Nations Aboriginal Head Start
- Institute for Cross-Cultural Exchange
- Leq' a:mel First Nation
- Mamele'awt Qweesome/To'o Housing Society
- Ministry of Advanced Education
- Mission Chamber of Commerce
- Mission Community Services
- Mission Friendship Centre
- Mission Medium Security Prison
- Mission Public Library
- Postmedia Raise-a-Reader
- *Siwal Si'wes MPSD Advisory Committee*
- Stó:lō Nation, Aboriginal Family Place Success by 6
- United Way of the Fraser Valley
- Work BC

## Goals and Actions of the Past Year:

### Past Year Priorities, Goals, and Objectives

#### *Priorities:*

Our priority was to rebuild and expand the CALP program (Community Adult Literacy Program). The CALP program has suffered substantial funding reduction in the past year due to lack of participants, both volunteers and learners. This resulted in an attempt to bring this valuable and much need program back to the community.

Although there was a funding reduction, the CALP program had a two year guaranteed funding allotment. Therefore, we were able to re-establish the program in the community.

#### *Goals:*

We are looking for sustainable funding to support and expand existing programs such as Book Buddies

Explore ways to re-establish our relationship with two local Food Banks

We are still pursuing financial support for our Literacy Bus, which has been parked for a year due to lack of funding. The Literacy Bus was a valuable asset for people with low literacy skills who live in the smaller rural areas as well as the Aboriginal communities that surround Mission, BC.

Our goal was to keep programs fresh for the participants with innovative ideas and continued recruitment of qualified enthusiastic volunteers to help facilitate these programs.

#### *Objectives:*

These include maintaining and supporting ongoing programs such as:

- Reading Buddies
- Book Buddies
- Homework Club
- Thursday Club
- Volunteer Tutor Training
- IELTS (International English Language Testing System)
- CALP (Community Adult Literacy Plan)
- Financial Literacy
- Computer Literacy
- Riot of Reading
- Family Day Celebration
- The Inmate Book Club – Mission Medium Security Prison
- One to One Volunteer – Learner Matches

Our overall goal and objective was to maintain existing relationships and develop new contacts with partner organizations and agencies. In addition, to rebuild and establish affiliations with the outlying communities surrounding Mission, BC

### *Actions:*

**Marketing:** Brochures and posters were printed and distributed through community partners; the goal was to recruit both volunteers and learners.

We provided outreach through committees and participation in community events to raise our profile.

**Training:** We trained Volunteers and then paired them one-to-one with our learners. We trained Volunteers to facilitate our group programs.

**Programing:** Through community partnership consultation, we rebuilt the CALP program to offer small group programs that are designed to fulfill our learner-lead mandate. They include:

- financial literacy
- tutor training
- on-site tutor training at the Mission Friendship Centre
- IELTS program
- beginner computer classes at UFV
- small group literacy tutoring classes
- book club support at Mission Medium Security Institution

A partnership with the Siwal Si'wes Aboriginal Education Department was renewed and this allowed us to continue the Book Buddies Program at *École Mission Central* Elementary School. Reduced funding put this program at risk, the renewed relationship allowed us to continue this very successful program.

Participants who collaborated to spread the word included:

- Family Literacy Committee
- Community Services
- University of the Fraser Valley
- Mission Public Schools
- Centennial Place
- District of Mission
- Mission Friendship Centre
- Volunteers
- Mission Public Library
- Dasmesh Punjabi School
- Mission City Record Newspaper
- What's On! Mission publication
- Coffee News publication



Participants who have collaborated through donations:

- Starbucks
- Graba Java
- Pete's Pizza
- Tim Hortons
- Subway
- Coffee News
- Mission City Read
- Sue's Copy Place
- Safeway
- Save-on Foods

Overall, our attempt to save the Literacy Bus included a presentation to the city, financial institutions, various local clubs and we also wrote grants. To date no funding has become available.

### Adjustments, Opportunities, Changes

Adjustments caused by lack of funding resulted in outreach to the geographically remote areas of the District of Mission to become almost nonexistent. The Bus was our means of outreach to these areas and because we could not find funding the BUS is parked. In order to compensate for its absence we offered onsite programming and were able to use the Band office on one occasion. Our concern is that valuable relationships, opportunities to reach at risk populations and partnerships with the rural communities and bank offices have been lost.

We established a new relationship with a private Punjabi School whose students have historically participated as 'Little Buddies' in our Reading Buddies program at the Mission Public Library. Once again, due to our outreach endeavours, we now have high school students from this school participating in the role of volunteer mentor 'Big Buddies' in our program.

Due to lack of funding, we have had to withdraw the 'Thursday Club' program from the community. We held this program on site in the Mamele'awt Qweesome/To'o Housing Society Amenities Room.



### Indications of Success:

*New opportunities arose through expanding partnerships within the community.*

**Mission Medium Institution:** We placed sets of new children's books in each of the family visiting rooms at Mission Medium Institution and a volunteer facilitates monthly a book club with eight members

**Rivendell Second Stage Housing:** Weekly, volunteer led small group literacy classes covering math, reading, writing, and computers.

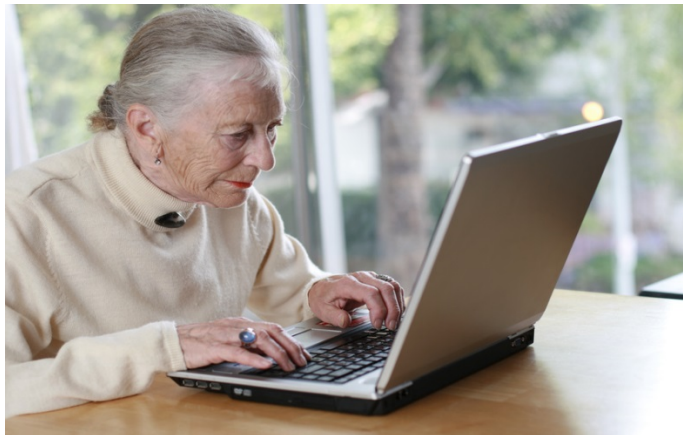
**ESL - IELTS:** Two qualified volunteers teach a weekly IELTS (International English Language Testing System) program to a cross section of highly educated immigrants. This program has excellent attendance and is very popular due to the outstanding charismatic volunteer tutors.

**University of the Fraser Valley:** Partnered with the University to offer a successful beginner computer program

*Indications of success is the increased participation in programs. Examples include:*

- i. This year's Riot of Reading celebration of Literacy had the largest attendance in twelve years. The event is a multi-cultural affair with participation from community partners to provide information, performances and attendance from International students, a private school (Dasmesh Punjabi School) of Punjabi school performers, First Nations drumming, Turkish Dancing, flash mob acting, free pizza and cake.
- ii. We increased the number of volunteers who trained as tutors, and are working in one-to-one scenarios with our learners.
- iii. Volunteers are teaching small group classes including computers, literacy, personal budgeting financial literacy, and the IELTS program.
- iv. Our computer tutor has enabled one learner to access the Facebook social network where she connected with a son and grandchild. The amazing part is that the woman had lost contact with her son eleven years ago and thanks to our volunteer, they were reunited.
- v. A second example pertains to another Learner, he was taught how to use his iPhone and is now in constant contact with his family in Iran through Skype and other social media programs.

- vi. The IELTS program is very successful with a regular attendance by the participants. The two volunteers took the entire class to an Abbotsford Heat hockey game, with tickets provided by the United Way. Strong team building has happened due to the field trip. Also, helpful linguistic knowledge was built into the excursion with vocabulary and grammar lessons before and after the game. This exercise made for outstanding results on several levels. This class has an atmosphere of open and trusting relationships. The learners have been provided with an open ended learning experience with no end date looming due to lack of funding, as funding will be sustained through 2015. It is clear that good relationships are the result of successful programs.
- vii. Homework club is in the third year of operation, and is facilitated by a Volunteer who is a qualified Educational Assistant (EA). Attendance is high in the program that is held once a week at two elementary schools and is open to all students in the District. A second volunteer is now working in this program.
- viii. There are more applicants than space in the Aboriginal directed Book Buddies program. Although the program is successful, we are unable to grow it due to lack of funding, which in turn would enable us to provide more staff to keep the correct adult to child ratio. This program has adult and middle school volunteers as well as one paid staff.
- ix. Our Reading Buddies Program is very successful and has a high participation rate. This is being held at the Mission Public Library in Mission, BC. The volunteers include adults and students from the three high schools in Mission, providing a mentorship opportunity for these students and support to the struggling readers.
- x. The Mother Goose program continues at capacity. We are receiving positive feedback from our participants, through evaluations and ongoing assessments. These assessments demonstrate both quantitative and qualitative feedback allowing us to gather learner/participant outlook and responses.



### Challenges:

#### What are the Difficulties:

Unstable funding causes great difficulty in the planning and delivery of our programs. A great deal of valuable time and energy is spent chasing funding thus the real work of literacy becomes secondary when our mandate is to "... empower people by making connections."

Successful programming requires strategies that encompass more than one year at a time. Literacy programs are relationship based. Therefore, vulnerable populations are slow to participate, as they must first develop a trusting relationship with the facilitators.

It takes time to develop partnerships, begin programs, achieve success, and have participants enjoy, become immersed, feel safe, and supported in their learning environment. These experiences are very important components in any literacy program. In addition, to have it removed before there has been time to create these trusted relationships is not beneficial to either the learners or the facilitators/volunteers. Honest trusting relationships result in successful programs.

An example is the loss of our Literacy Bus. This valuable asset took years of work and a great deal of money to create and now it sits idle. Members of the general public continually ask when the Literacy Bus is returning, where the Bus is, and why isn't it being used anymore. Calls come from drivers requesting we put the Literacy Bus back in action. Unfortunately, there is no way for us to facilitate this and as such our inability to access our remote rural population is a real detriment to achieving our literacy goals.

An example of the domino effect of this loss is that on a weekly basis, a counselor from a partner agency used to ride on the Literacy Bus to the rural areas, where she held meetings with her at-risk clients while the driver did outreach to the surrounding community population. This no longer happens, for the clients and our partnership with this agency has suffered another loss.

## What Would Help?

Community literacy groups, such as MLiM need recognition as ongoing viable and necessary components of their community.

Core funding should be designed to allow for 3, 4, or 5 year program building as it takes longer than six months or a year to enhance literacy skills in a community

Since Decoda is able to reach the Provincial Government, it would be useful if they facilitated seminars and training sessions to help the community literacy groups learn how to reach and leverage local and municipal government and businesses

Community literacy groups should also be provided free of charge access to grant websites that would be useful at the community level

The authenticity and necessity of community literacy groups' work recognized by the Provincial Government and thereby have ongoing sustainable funding. Each year too much energy and time is wasted lobbying for well-deserved funding. This takes away from the low literacy learners/citizens who need help improving their literacy skills so they can improve their quality of life. A trusting relationship makes for successful programs.

## The Coming Year:

### Opportunities, Challenges and Issues in the Community

We will take this opportunity to focus more on programs for adults, youth, and children, concentrate on the basic needs in each community, and make existing programs stronger.

As the Mission Downtown Business Association moves ahead – we will be a part of this project responding to and helping vulnerable populations in our geographic area.

We will respond and participate in the Mission Community Healthy Council outcomes as appropriate to our mandate.

### Goals, Priorities or Objectives

- Work to sustain programs already in progress.
- Look for new opportunities through strengthening existing and building new partnerships.
- Work to become more visible in the community through outreach, partnerships, and participation in community events.

- Update our website/Facebook/Blog and other social media through a new relationship with participants in the Information Technology Program at the Riverside College. We plan to create a double end programming where students use our site as a project and we receive an updated and inventive new website.
- Public relations promotion through distribution of new pamphlets, posters and our outreach endeavors.
- Promote increased memberships, volunteers, and learners.

### Requirements to Meet Goals:

- Consistent staffing
- Strong Board Leadership
- Renewable funding stream
- Participation in the planning for the Mission Downtown Business Association
- Maintain ongoing partnerships with committees
- Sustain programming, while being creative and innovative to keep our programs current. This will enable us to reach new and bring awareness to a broader variety of people in Mission and the outlying areas.
- Work to raise awareness of Mission Literacy in Motion (MLiM) in the community so our goals, vision and mandate are universally known within the community

### Measuring Our Success

We will measure success by:

- Attendance and participation in our program offerings
- Expand our membership base
- Encourage more Volunteers to participate in our programs
- Develop more community awareness
- Promote new partnerships
- Maintain existing partnerships
- Expand Learner base

