



**Northwest Territories**  
**Literacy Council**

# Annual Report

**2023  
-  
2024**







# Northwest Territories Literacy Council Annual Report

## Who We Are

The NWT Literacy Council is a not-for-profit organization. We promote and support the development of literacy and essential skills in all the official languages of the NWT.

### Vision

People in the NWT will have the skills they need to be full and active participants in their family, in their community, in their culture, and in today's society.

### Mission

The NWT Literacy Council builds capacity through literacy training, research, resource development, and promotion for the benefit of all Northerners.





## What We Do

- Each year we provide workshops, training, and professional gatherings for community-based literacy practitioners. Topics include family literacy, Indigenous language literacy, embedding literacy and essential skills, youth and adult literacy, proposal writing, program planning, facilitation skills and workplace learning.
- We develop, publish, and distribute resources and learning materials for community-based family literacy, youth and adult literacy, and Indigenous language programs.
- We conduct research into issues that affect literacy and essential skills development in the NWT, and monitor and share research from other places that impacts our work here.
- We promote the value of literacy and essential skills through the materials we produce and the events we sponsor. Events include International Literacy Day, NWT Literacy Week, National Family Literacy Day and Indigenous Languages Month.
- We have an extensive network of interested stakeholders and partners, and share information about literacy and essential skills with them through our newsletters, e-news, social media and website.
- We promote the use of plain language and offer fee-for-service plain language design, writing, and editing services.
- We monitor and respond to territorial and national literacy and essential skills policies.
- We offer non-formal literacy and language programs to newcomers through our Community Connections program.







# President's Message

## Hello NWT Literacy Council members and friends!

2023-2024 marked a busy year for the NWT Literacy Council. We added new staff and programs, such as the Digital Literacy for Seniors program in Yellowknife, while long-standing programs such as Family Literacy continued. This allowed us to continue to provide programming across the lifespan.

A few highlights included our Empowering Northern Youth program, which offered pre-employment programs to youth aged 15-29 in Yellowknife. This successful program also offered a supported employment component, which gave youth the opportunity to try jobs in a field of interest.

Our Skills for Success program used a similar approach to provide programming to adults in various communities around the north. You can read more about these programs in the report that follows.

The Council staff worked hard throughout the year to provide engaging programs in areas such as immigration, family literacy, youth literacy, adult supports and Indigenous languages. They offered skills workshops and set up a social enterprise. With the addition of Yellowknife, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library expanded to include every community in the NWT.

The Council formalized the partnership with the Yukon Literacy Coalition and Iltaqsinik to create Shifting Ice.

The Board of Directors continued to meet to provide policy direction, and is looking forward to another year of literacy and essential skills programs across the NWT.

**Melani Adams,**  
NWTLC Board President





## Board of Directors

### President

**Ken Latour**  
(South Slave Regional Representative)  
to November 2023,

**Melani Adams**  
from November 2023

### Vice-President

**Melani Adams**  
(Beaufort Delta Representative)  
to November 2023

### Treasurer

**Rachel VanderVeen**  
(Yellowknife, Ndilo and  
Dettah Representative)

### Secretary

Vacant

### Tłıchọ Regional Representative

Vacant

### Deh Cho Regional Representative

Catherine Blondin

### Sahtu Regional Representative

Dayna Manuel

# Staff Members

## **Kathryn Barry Paddock**

Executive Director

## **Katie Johnson**

Program Director

## **Helen Balanoff**

Project Manager:  
Skills for Success

## **Charlotte Upton**

Project Specialist:  
Three for Change

## **Uma Sivakumar**

Administrative Assistant to May 2023, Project Specialist: Family and Community

Literacy from June-November 2023, Project Specialist: Community Connections from December 2023

## **Karen Johnson**

Project Specialist: Community Connections to October 2023

## **Stephanie van Pelt**

Integration Advisor  
to June 2023

Project Specialist: Community Literacy to December 2023

## **Grayce Patino**

Project Specialist: HIPPY

## **Jeremy Mousseau**

Project Specialist: Skills for Success to August 2023

## **Kristie Leach**

Project Specialist:  
Empowering Northern Youth

## **Nicole Sharp**

Project Specialist: Family and Community Literacy

## **Gillian Moir**

Project Manager:  
Three for Change

## **Stacey Drygeese Sundberg**

Project Specialist:  
Three for Change

## **Daina Sanderson**

Intern: Empowering Northern Youth to October 2023,

Project Specialist: Empowering Northern Youth from November 2023

## **Christine Lewandowski -Shannon**

Project Specialist:  
Family and Community Literacy to June 2023,

Project Specialist: Early Words from January 2024

## **Andrew Willy**

Administrative Assistant  
from June 2023

## **Oyuka Bernabe**

Project Specialist: Integration Advising and Digital Skills for Seniors from December 2023



# Resources

## This year we created a new resource.

Read the Rainbow is a Family Literacy program featuring books written or illustrated by members of the 2SLGBTQIPA+ community, or featuring 2SLGBTQIPA+ characters. A draft of the Read the Rainbow resource was printed, and a training was offered for the first time in 2023-24.

# Training

## This year we hosted the following trainings:

- **Family Literacy Training Institutes:** Training for facilitators working with children aged 0-6 and their parents or caregivers. Training was offered:
  - In Yellowknife for students of Aurora College's Early Learning and Childcare program in May 2023.
  - In Yellowknife for community facilitators from around the NWT in February 2024.
- **Advanced Family Literacy Training Institute:** Additional training for community facilitators who have already taken Family Literacy Training Institute and have been facilitating Family Literacy programs in their community. Offered in Yellowknife in December 2023.
- **Reading to Your Baby:** Workshops were offered for Yellowknife Public Health and Moms, Boobs and Babies' Post-natal Program
- **Skill Builders for Youth Training:** Training for facilitators working with youth aged 16-29 was offered in person in Yellowknife.





## Our staff made presentations at or participated in the following events:

- Learning Exchange on HIPPY in Small Centres & Communities - Mothers Matter Center, online
- Presentation to the Senate of Canada about Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, along with colleagues from Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Dollywood Foundation of Canada
- Local Government Administrators of the NWT annual conference Speed Dating
- Youth Literacy Programs and Reading Together - Literacy and Learning Symposium, Edmonton
- Yellowknife Pride Parade
- Birth and Baby Expo - Yellowknife
- MakerSpace Ecosystem Program - Committee Member, Yellowknife
- StoryWalk® during Earth Week - Yellowknife

## Our staff attended the following training or professional development sessions:

Staff professional development week included:





- All staff participated in Evaluation Training with our External Evaluator, Sue Folinsbee
- All staff completed WHMIS for Workers or Supervisors training, online
- Workplace First Aid - Arctic Response
- Canva Master Course - Udemy, online
- HIPPY Coordinators Annual Conference - Mothers Matters Center, Vancouver, BC
- Gender Based Analysis - WAGE Canada, online
- Building Access & Equity for Immigrants & Refugees with In/Visible Disabilities - OCASI, online
- Positive Parenting Solutions - Amy McCready, online
- Living Life to the Full - Canadian Mental Health Association, online
- Front-Line Skills for Social Services - Crisis & Trauma Resource Institute, Yellowknife
- Parenting Matters: Honouring and Promoting Children's Rights - Saskatchewan Prevention Network, Saskatoon
- Non-Profit Management Certificate courses - Simon Fraser University
- Early Years Conference: Connecting and Belonging in the Early Years - University of British Columbia, Vancouver
- Fire Smart 101 - GNWT, online





## Digital Skills for Seniors

*(funded by Government of Canada's Age Well at Home initiative)*

The Digital Skills for Seniors Basic Computer class first cohort began in February 2024. The program took place every Monday and Thursday at the Baker Center. Ten seniors participated in the first cohort. Seniors were from Armenia, the Philippines, Lebanon, and Ghana, as well as others from Yellowknife and Indigenous participants. Despite challenges and barriers of nationality, language, and skill, the program was a big success because we adapted the training to be accessible and understood by all attendees.

For the first cohort, we created a safe and welcoming environment for seniors, motivating them to participate and engage. An IT professional assisted with facilitation of the training sessions. We included games before the training and a picture board to help participants get to know each other and interact during the sessions. We also included videos in the training to keep them interested.

We ordered 10 laptops, 10 tablets, two smart translation pens and 10 headphone sets. These tools were provided to the class for hands-on training. Used laptops and computers, donated by the Computer for Schools program, were supplied to all 10 participants to use. This allowed them to practice more and use their knowledge. We successfully used Google Translate to help them understand their languages.

The course is becoming very popular and we have more than 15 seniors on the waiting list for the next fiscal year.

## Connecting Indigenous Languages Communities

*(funded by GNWT Education, Culture and Employment)*

In the Northwest Territories, February marks Indigenous Languages month, a time dedicated to celebrating and revitalizing Indigenous languages. Throughout this month, we emphasize the significance of language preservation and encourage everyone to engage in learning and practicing one of the nine Indigenous languages in the NWT.

This year our theme was "Say it" in Your Language. We organized an online Indigenous Languages Month Bingo for everyone in the NWT to participate in. This featured language challenges for adults and youth to be completed by the end of the month for a chance to win prizes from local Indigenous businesses. We also had weekly challenges to foster continuous engagement.



We unfortunately couldn't have the annual year-end celebration in Yellowknife for the Mentor-Apprentice Program apprentices and mentors. Instead, we offered and facilitated their attendance at the Supporting Indigenous

Languages Revitalization conference that took place in Enoch, Alberta. There they shared, learned, connected, and collaborated with other language champions.

## Community Connections, HIPPY, and Information and Orientation

*(funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the City of Yellowknife's Community Services Grant)*

The Community Connections Program in Yellowknife welcomes newcomers to engage in local culture and activities, regardless of immigration status. Weekly gatherings provide opportunities for English practice and socializing, fostering friendships and language skills. Monthly cooking circles celebrate diverse cuisines, while family literacy activities at the library encourage bonding and learning. Recreational outings, including visits to the snow castle and swimming, offer fun for all ages. In summer, community gardening teaches newcomers about northern agriculture, promoting teamwork and sustainability.

In a year of resilience and innovation, the HIPPY Program reached full capacity, supporting eight immigrant families through a hybrid approach. Prioritizing in-person home visits strengthened connections. Two participants completed the three-year curriculum, graduating in June 2024, showcasing the program's commitment to long-term support and empowerment. Monthly group meetings fostered community cohesion and covered various topics from parenting, family health, and financial literacy to fire prevention and safety. HIPPY looks ahead, emphasizing family strength, settlement, community integration, and school readiness and welcoming referrals for families with the most needs.

Information and Orientation Services assist clients, through a personalized needs assessment, with Income and Child Benefits applications, job searches, and health appointments using interpretation services. New parents and pregnant clients are connected to family groups and health centers. Six information sessions were held on Tax and Child Benefits and resumé writing. Additionally, the women-only workout classes and activities, combined with information sessions on breast cancer, women's health, and mental health bring enormous benefits to the community.



## Family Literacy

*(funded by GNWT Education, Culture and Employment)*

Despite challenges faced by the unprecedented wildfire season in 2023, the Family Literacy team persevered to support and enhance family literacy through multiple initiatives. In May, we delivered our Family Literacy Training Institute specifically for students in Aurora College's Early Learning and Childcare program, followed by a session open to attendees from across the Territory in February. We hosted an Advanced Family Literacy Training Institute in December to further support experienced Family Literacy providers.

Our team is incredibly grateful to all the Family Literacy providers who organized and delivered engaging programs and events for families throughout the Territory. Through their efforts, 24 family events and programs were hosted in seven communities of the NWT.

This year marked a significant expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. A generous donation from Telus allowed us to extend this program to include the city of Yellowknife. Thanks to continued support from Diavik and Gahcho Kué Diamond Mines, we are able to ensure this program is available to every child aged 0-5 in the NWT.

We embraced exciting new ways to engage with our local community in Yellowknife. In June, our team enthusiastically walked (and biked) in Yellowknife's first Pride Parade organized by the Northern Mosaic Network. The parade ended at our parked Bison Bus that was open for families to enjoy. Our presence at the first Birth and Baby Expo in January allowed us to connect with new parents and caregivers, providing them with resources that support early childhood literacy.



## Early Words

*(funded by GNWT Department of Health and Social Services)*

In January 2024 the NWT Literacy Council, in partnership with the Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation, began a Northwest Territories chapter of Early Words. This program connects healthcare providers with resources to foster early literacy skills, developed with experts such as the Canadian Paediatric Society. Early Words strengthens early brain development and literacy skills through collaborations with clinics, hospitals, and communities, offering coaching and books to families. After a successful launch at Yellowknife's Baby Expo and a trial clinic in Inuvik, we're engaging families and gathering community input across the north throughout 2024-2025.

## Empowering Northern Youth Through Career Development

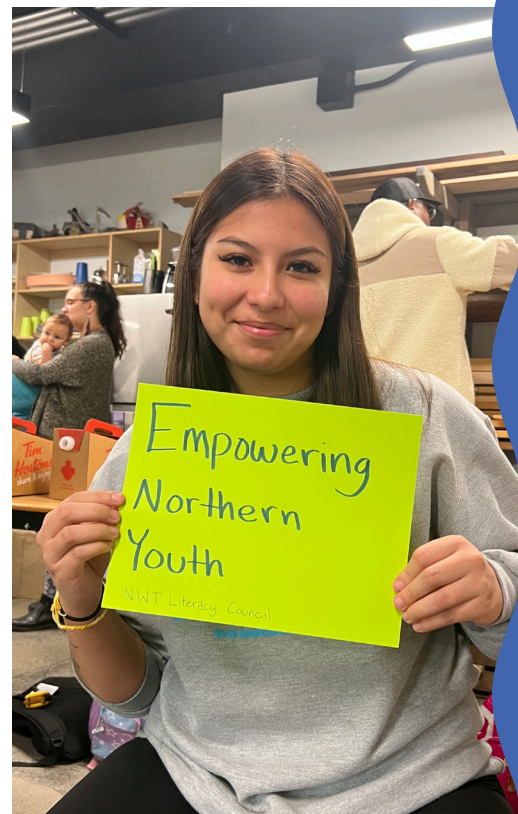
*(funded by the Government of Canada's Youth Employment and Skills Strategy)*

The Empowering Northern Youth through Career Development program is a partnership with the Yukon Literacy Coalition and Iltaqsiq.


Our vision is to support and inspire youth as they transition from adolescence to adulthood and enter the working world or work towards post-secondary education. We strive to provide a nurturing and culturally responsive environment that respects and integrates local cultures. The program runs for six weeks and targets residents aged 15-30, particularly focusing on the BIPOC population.

This year we ran three cohorts with four weeks of classroom learning, covering essential credentials including First Aid, WHIMIS, Food Safety, and key skills such as communication, problem solving, conflict management, wellbeing and leadership. The program is unique as we weave cultural and on-the-land activities and traditional teaching practices with modern skills. Following the classroom session, participants undertake a two-week work placement with local employers, gaining practical experience and support with essential documentation.

Our mission is to support participants to become the best they can be. We empower them to see themselves as bright, capable individuals who bring value to their communities.







Our goal is to help them to develop essential skills and competencies; build self-assurance and pride; actively set and achieve their goals; and confidently navigate both Western and Indigenous worlds. Ultimately, we aim to help them start meaningful career paths and increase their overall wellbeing.

Participants have shown significant improvements in confidence, wellbeing, self-awareness, and goal setting. They have thrived in outdoor learning environments, embraced traditional knowledge, and engaged in food and cooking activities. Through experiential hands-on learning, community partnerships, and overcoming challenges, they have grown tremendously.

Our impact is reflected in the program's statistics: three cohorts with a total of 18 students, age-range adjustments based on the time of year, consistent gender balance, and 100% achievement in reaching our target audience and engaging at-risk youth.

## **Skill Builders for Youth**

*(funded by GNWT Education, Culture and Employment)*

Our Skill Builders for Youth program is about re-engaging youth with learning and with their community. We provide training and mentorship to develop community capacity, and then offer funding and ongoing support to help community members run youth literacy programs.

We hosted our annual Skill Builders for Youth training May 30 - June 1, 2023. Training included an overview of Skills for Success, how to embed skills into youth programming, introduction to our resources, and information on program evaluation. As a special addition to this year's training, participants were able to take part in a day of networking with local youth and other youth-serving organizations. This included collaborative activities like a voyageur canoe ride around Yellowknife's Houseboat Bay, as well as group songwriting, sculpting and print making. Sixteen Skill Builders for Youth projects were successfully completed in seven different communities.

We've updated some of our resources, including expanding our digital literacy kit for our Telling our Stories program. We will be looking at developing new resources based on feedback from facilitators and youth involved in the program. After nine years, this program continues to receive overwhelmingly positive feedback from youth and facilitators.

## Skills for Success

*(funded by Employment and Social Development Canada)*

This year we delivered Skills for Success Programs in three NWT communities.

- After wildfire and evacuations, we offered the program in Gamèti in October. We followed this with an orientation session in Inuvik in January for staff from Aklavik and Fort McPherson. In all, 26 people took part in the programs.
- Cultural Connections activities included building a smoke house, sewing and beading, and cooking traditional food.
- Classroom learning involved employment readiness components, such as professionalism.
- Work certifications included First Aid, Food Safety, Driver Training, and WHMIS.
- Work placements took place in housing, Jordan's Principle program, daycare, and different branches of local and Indigenous governments.

Our thanks go to the many partners that contributed to the success of the programs.





## Adult Supports

*(funded by GNWT Education, Culture and Employment)*

This year our Adult Supports work continued to increase our communications work, hosting NWT Literacy Week and distributing resources for adult education programs. Our communications include our monthly e-newsletter -- Literacy this Month -- our annual Literacy wall calendar, our website blog, and social media on Facebook and Instagram.

This year our theme for NWT Literacy Week was Literacy and Safety, highlighting the connection between literacy skills and safety at home, work, school and in the community. We provided NWTLC-branded children's safety vests, First Aid kits, bike lights and stress balls to community groups and individuals for online contests. We featured daily safety ideas online; we hosted a used book giveaway and a swim at the pool; and we funded events in communities. A new event this year was a draw for book club kits. The kits contained five or ten copies of a variety of books, along with teas and treats to enjoy while reading and discussing the books. These were very popular, with 76 entries to win one of 15 kits.

We fulfilled resource requests throughout the year by mail, and also gave out resources at community events, such as the Local Government Administrators of the NWT and Program Support Teachers conferences. Our Northern Biographies and math series resources continue to be our most popular items.





## Growing Forward Together

*(funded by the Government of Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund)*

The intention of the Community Services Recovery Fund was to support Canadian Charities in their rebuilding after the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. For NWTLC, challenges of the pandemic included our data and IT infrastructure not being set up for remote work, the need for updated Occupational Health and Safety policies, and our Board of Directors not being able to come together for face-to-face meetings for three years.

Our project included beginning a modernization and overhaul of our database, which will include new systems for training and funding applications. We began working with an Occupational Health and Safety consultant to create a full Workplace Health and Safety Program. We also hosted a staff Professional Development week including sessions of Supervisor Safety Training and Microsoft Excel training.

## Green Jobs

*(funded by the Canadian Recreation and Parks Association)*

This year we received funding for two summer students in the month of August under the Green Jobs initiative. The planned activities for the students were to host outdoor Family Literacy events at parks around Yellowknife, to travel with Family Literacy staff to visit communities with the Bison Bus Mobile Family Centre, and to build a Learning Garden at our office.

Unfortunately, due to air quality issues and then the wildfire evacuation of Yellowknife, most events were cancelled or were moved inside. The students were able to host family activities at Oldtown Ramble and Ride, as well as host activities at the Yellowknife Public Library in place of one park activity.





## Three for Change

*(funded by Employment and Social Development Canada)*

The NWT Literacy Council continues to work on the Three for Change project that has been funded by the Government of Canada since 2022. Despite the evacuation of the City of Yellowknife, the Literacy Council was able to deliver the required five Skills for Success workshops. Each workshop was provided through different activities, such as on-the-land camps and settings incorporating Indigenous teachings and traditions. Each workshop targeted a different skill with both youth and adult participants. The Literacy Council collaborated with a variety of local organizations and groups, including Yellowknives Dene First Nation, YK Makerspace and the Territorial Agrifood Association, in the planning and delivery of workshops.

Although the Literacy Council and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation had been collaborating on the development and opening of the T'è?ehdaà Cultural Café, a social

enterprise, a number of changes influenced the Yellowknives Dene's ability to support a site-based café. However, training opportunities were provided to seven community-based residents, and the group adjusted the social enterprise vision to deliver catering and 'pop up' food services within Yellowknife and to the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. Training sessions were delivered in various "food" environments including local cafés, schools and the Legislative Assembly. The seven participants learned about food safety, cooking and delivering food, food planning, and how to operate and manage a small business. The participants had the opportunity to visit a number of café sites and learn from partners who shared their knowledge and experience.

A successful territorial social enterprise was established when the group launched their catering and food preparation business in April 2024.



*(funded by United Way NWT)*

## Heating Systems

## Moms/Feminine Caregivers of Children with Disabilities Book Club

NWT Literacy Council | Annual Report 2023 - 2024



# Project Funders



# Financial Statements



**Statement of Operations**  
**For the year ended March 31, 2024**

	<b>2024 Budget (Unaudited)</b>	<b>2024 Actual</b>	<b>2023 Actual</b>
<b>Revenues</b>			
Contribution revenue	\$ 3,395,876	\$ 1,792,227	\$ 1,584,551
Administration and other	27,368	122,866	109,928
Donations	-	2,554	36,986
Plain Language Services	-	2,488	8,400
Resource revenue	-	2,500	-
Rent revenue	-	16,018	37,260
Investment income	-	4,609	972
Recoveries of expenses	-	197,850	371,213
Amortization of capital contribution	-	5,736	-
Transfer to capital contribution	-	(25,494)	-
	3,423,244	2,121,354	2,149,310
Transfer from deferred revenue	-	1,175,546	765,264
	3,423,244	3,296,900	2,914,574



**Statement of Operations, continued**  
**For the year ended March 31, 2024**

	<b>2024 Budget (Unaudited)</b>	<b>2024 Actual</b>	<b>2023 Actual</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Administration fees	163,124	127,919	130,958
Advertising and promotion	23,235	23,064	23,108
Amortization	-	45,503	42,195
Communications	1,567	12,202	17,096
Community literacy projects	195,047	186,018	189,655
Computer expense	16,872	48,199	34,856
Contract fees	386,173	492,062	245,558
Fees and dues	500	792	550
Honoraria	-	-	10,250
Hospitality	-	14,587	8,959
Insurance	4,000	479	10,355
Interest and bank charges	300	1,624	2,454
Interest on mortgage	-	37,919	28,807
Office and administration	-	6,222	16,097
Office supplies	85,068	44,493	20,808
PGI expenses	-	-	788
Postage and courier	8,500	14,224	8,160
Printing	26,900	25,976	25,563
Professional development	156,954	18,542	13,255
Professional fees	28,500	55,267	39,489
Property taxes	-	15,432	12,590
Rent	23,079	29,044	30,155
Repairs and maintenance	5,000	7,861	19,258
Resources	97,996	185,653	100,933
Translation services	-	328	1,001
Travel	114,401	154,271	136,188
Utilities	-	8,282	6,757
Wages and benefits	1,894,711	1,722,467	1,281,181
Workshops	191,018	266,008	238,755
	<b>3,423,244</b>	<b>3,544,438</b>	<b>2,695,779</b>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenditures from operations</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ (247,538)</b>	<b>\$ 218,795</b>

**Statement of Financial Position**  
**As at March 31, 2024**

	2024	2023 (Note 14)
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Cash	\$ 621,313	\$ 1,566,615
Short term investments (Note 3)	246,570	241,963
Accounts receivable (Note 4)	754,760	420,821
Prepaid expenses	7,545	7,911
Government remittances receivable (Note 8)	21,760	27,396
	1,651,948	2,264,706
<b>Restricted cash</b>	2,560	2,558
<b>Property, plant and equipment (Note 5)</b>	603,489	620,471
	\$ 2,257,997	\$ 2,887,735
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 6)	\$ 324,331	\$ 183,142
Wages and benefits payable	138,986	85,309
Deferred revenue (Note 7)	578,184	1,177,722
Government remittances payable (Note 8)	35,220	6,070
Current portion of mortgage payable	26,437	26,437
	1,103,159	1,478,680
<b>Mortgage payable (Note 9)</b>	427,407	453,844
<b>Deferred capital contributions (Note 10)</b>	19,758	-
	1,550,324	1,932,524
<b>FUND BALANCES</b>	707,673	955,211
	\$ 2,257,997	\$ 2,887,735

# Thank you!

NWTLC would like to extend our appreciation to all of our funders, donors and supporters.

Without this support we would not be able to provide the services that we do to NWT residents.





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Literacy Council

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