

Literacy Matters

SPRING 2018

In This Issue...

[Children First Society
Makes Big Difference to
Inuvik Families 1](#)

[President's Message 2](#)

[Check Out
Our Resources 3](#)

[The NWT Celebrates
NWT Literacy Week 4](#)

[Never Board
in Fort Simpson 5](#)

[We Support Aurora
College's Literacy and
Essential Skills Courses . 6](#)

[Family Literacy Day
Around the NWT 7](#)

[Making Connections
with Newcomers 8](#)

[Literacy Champions
Honoured 9](#)

[Family Literacy
Happenings 10](#)

[Building Skills
Among Youth 12](#)

[Learners Write 13](#)

[Celebrate Indigenous
Languages in March
and Every Day 14](#)



Photo: Tony Devlin

Children First Society Makes Big Difference to Inuvik Families

The Children First Society motto is: helping children achieve their greatness. At the same time the Children First Centre gives parents safe and consistent childcare they can count on.

Operating out of Inuvik's \$6 million early childhood development centre, Children First opened in 2013 after four years of hard work planning, raising money in the community, and finding municipal, territorial and federal agencies to contribute to the project. Little wonder that the society won the Outstanding Volunteer award for groups that year.

"It really was a community-built, grassroots effort," says Patricia Davison, who has been the executive director since the centre opened.

[...continued on pg 15](#)

President's Message: Ken Latour

Newsletter Reflects Our Work and Activities

As the 2017-2018 fiscal year is quickly coming to a close, it is time to reflect on the year, and continue to plan for 2018-2019. Our Spring newsletter is a good time to share what we've done in the past year, and what we are currently working on.

We welcomed new staff to the Council this fall. Christine Barker joined the Family and Community Literacy team, as Emily Smith moved to Youth and Adult Services to cover Katie Johnson's parental leave.

Maxine Lacorne joined us to work on the Indigenous Literacy gathering in November. We met Maxine through a presentation that she gave as part of our board meeting in September.

Karen Johnson joined us as the Integration Literacy Coordinator for our new project with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

Karen has been making connections within the newcomer community, and setting up programs such as global cooking, homework clubs, and community outings.

Both our Family Literacy and Youth Literacy programs have been busy with training, community visits, and creating resources for community practitioners. One of the resources that our family literacy staff recently created came from our board meeting in September. Our board did some reconciliation work with Maggie Mercredi, of Ravenessence Consulting, and thought one step could be to highlight books for children by Indigenous authors. We created a poster in time for Family Literacy Day 2018, and sent it to our contacts in all of the communities.

Our NABE (Northern Adult Basic Education) project with Aurora



College continues. Our most recent course, *Introduction to Supply Chain Management*, has been piloted. We are currently at work on *Introduction to Community Caregivers*. We continue to stay current and involved in curriculum development for adult learners, sitting on committees with other professionals in the field.

As we look forward to next fiscal year, we are grateful to the partners, funders, and staff who continue to make valued contributions to literacy and essential skills across the north.

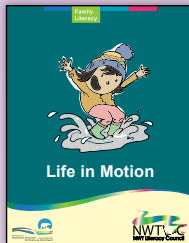
Searching for New Board Members

The NWT Literacy Council is looking for new board members for three regions. We had resignations this fall from the Deh Cho board member, Sharon Allen, and from the Yellowknife-Dettah-Ndilo board member, Rachel Gauthier. We are still working to fill the Sahtu position vacated last year by long-time board member, Mary Ann Vital.



Literacy Matters | Spring 2018

Check Out Our Resources!

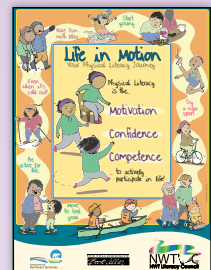


Life in Motion: Physical Literacy How-To Kit

This lively how-to kit explains physical literacy, its benefits, and has suggestions for activities to keep you moving at all ages.

Life in Motion: Your Physical Literacy Journey

This companion poster with tips for keeping active hopes to motivate people to keep moving. Both these resources were created for NWT Literacy Week 2017 and are illustrated by Yellowknife artist, Alison McCreesh.



Books for Children by Indigenous Authors

This bright and engaging poster showcases 25 books by Indigenous authors.

Family Literacy Day Bookmarks

We printed three of our most popular family literacy recipes on bookmarks — No Cook Play Dough, Let's Make Lemonade and We All Scream for Ice Cream. Perfect for fun family activities.



These resources can be found at
www.nwtliteracy.ca

The NWT Celebrates NWT Literacy Week

This past fall we celebrated NWT Literacy Week a little differently than we have in the past. Usually we're busy promoting literacies like reading, writing, and numeracy. This fall we celebrated by promoting physical literacy.

Our theme was *Physical Literacy: Life in Motion*, and our goal was to motivate people of all ages and abilities to get moving in whatever way best suited them. We also encouraged people to use traditional literacies with physical literacy — for example, using an Indigenous language during a scavenger hunt.

We provided up to \$300 each to support 15 different events in Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Providence, Fort Smith, Ndilo, Dettah, Tulita, and Fort McPherson. The NWT Literacy Council received a lot of great feedback about all the different events that took place around the NWT.

The Inuvik Senior Men's Basketball league celebrated by hosting several games of free pick-up basketball during NWT Literacy Week. The Inuvik Centennial Library hosted three free swims throughout the week where families had the opportunity to learn the rules of the pool.

In Fort McPherson, the librarian organized community sports or games each night in the school gym for people of all ages. In Tulita, there was a family yoga event, a youth obstacle course, adult fitness classes, and a get active event for elders.

Deh Gah School in Fort Providence hosted a series of interactive activities focused on physical literacy for different ages of students throughout the week. Students also learned how to make homemade healthy snacks and smoothies, and had school-wide teacher-student games, activities, and draws.

The Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities organized an Inclusive Rock and Glow-Bowl at the local bowling centre. The Hay River Library Committee presented Hay River's Amazing Race at the local library for families and people of all ages. It included challenges, a scavenger hunt, and other tasks for participants to complete. All participants were entered into a draw for prizes.

Students at Joseph Burr Tyrell School in Fort Smith learned and played physical literacy activities at lunch hours throughout the week on the playground. The school hopes this will be the start to ongoing group games and outdoor play for the rest of the year, providing options to students for "movement" in various ways, during lunch hour and recess.

The Goyatikò Language Centre hosted events in both Ndilo and Dettah. Both communities had family scavenger hunts that took participants around their community, walking and running outside to find items on a list. All of the lists were in the Wilìdeh language.

In Yellowknife, more than 300 people came to our Physical Literacy Family Fun Night at the Fieldhouse. We had different games and activities for families to do together, book prizes for everyone who came, dinner, and a bouncy castle.

Literacy Matters | Spring 2018



Never Board in Fort Simpson

The Never Board Game Club in Fort Simpson is the brainchild of adult educator, Dean Harvey. It's fun, social, includes different age groups, improves literacy, and builds relationships.

Dean is a long-time game enthusiast, confessing to a childhood chess addiction until his interest veered toward other games, such as Dungeons and Dragons. In tabletop role-playing games such as this, players take on the role of fictional characters. One player acts as game master deciding on the rules and acting as a referee while keeping track of each character. Role-playing games are sometimes called interactive storytelling. Role-plays can continue from one week to the next and involve "very sophisticated plots," says Dean.

There are a core of regulars, usually a few newcomers, and some less regular participants each week. The club has over 50 different competitive and collaborative games, with a variety of themes, everything from spy vs. spy, fantasy, westerns, and science fiction.

The Never Board Game Club capitalizes on the social, interactive aspects of tabletop games, including traditional board games, to help its participants get to know other community members of all ages. Approximately one-third of the regular participants are adults over 18. While attracting mostly male members, about 20 percent of participants are female. "The Never Board Game Club is the only literacy-based activity outside of school that engages males," says Dean, who notes males generally have lower literacy rates than females in the same age group.

At the risk of taking some of the fun out of the activity, Dean points out that games, especially role-playing games, help participants hone most of the essential skills. Participants document their characters, read rules and guidelines, work together, use money math, communicate, and think creatively and critically.

The club attracts an average of 18 participants after school at the Aurora College Learning Centre until closing time at 9 pm. Dean is at the centre on these nights to be available for tutoring, to supervise tests, and to monitor public computer access. He also supervises the two older participants hired as literacy coaches to keep club attendance, teach games, prepare snacks and clean up at the end of the night.

Aurora College and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment Community Literacy Development Fund support the Never Board Game Club. In its' fifth year, it operates 28 evenings between September and June, one week during spring break and 10 weekend afternoons.

Dean also credits the game club with making the Aurora College Community Learning Centre a more accessible part of the community, bringing high school students and other community members into contact with the services and help available from the community adult educator.

We Support Aurora College's Literacy and Essential Skills Courses

Since 2012, the NWT Literacy Council has received funding from Aurora College to develop literacy and essential skills (LES) programming for adult education students. The money comes from the Government of Canada funding that the College receives for its Northern Adult Basic Education programming.

To date, we have developed, pilot tested, and revised the following courses:

- *Foundations for Success*
- *Introduction to Office Skills*
- *Introduction to Early Learning and Child Care*
- *Start Your Own Small Business*
- *Small Business Funding and Marketing*
- *Ready to Work NWT*
- *Introduction to Construction Labourer Basics (plus, Construction Math Essentials)*
- *Introduction to Retail and Hospitality*
- *Introduction to Northern Leadership*
- *Skill Boosters*

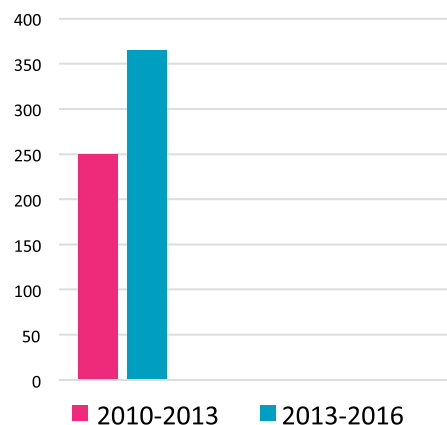
We are now completing *Introduction to Supply Chain Management*, and developing a new course, *Introduction to Community Caregivers*. Adult educators, other College staff, as well as the NWT ASETS (Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy) holders, all have input into what each new course should be.

Each course is six-weeks long. Participants learn introductory technical skills for specific jobs, at the same time as they are increasing their literacy and numeracy skills. However, the courses have outcomes beyond just those for the workplace. In each course, participants learn a number of very transferrable skills. For example, in the *Supply Chain Management Course*, there is a whole module on reading and filling out forms. Participants are then able to transfer the skills they learn in that module to their everyday lives... to filling out any form.

The LES courses have proved to be very successful. According to the latest report from Aurora College¹, the LES courses have contributed to:

- Increasing Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) enrolments at the Community Learning Centres (CLCs). In 2016, 115 more students enrolled at the centres than in 2010.
- Meeting community needs
- Revitalizing the Community Learning Centres
- Increasing ALBE completion rates in the LES courses (a 79% completion rate)

Increasing ALBE enrolments at the CLCs



Approximately 700 participants have enrolled in the various courses since they were introduced.

The Council of Ministers of Education Canada recognized the courses in their publication *Toolkit of Promising Practices*, as a promising practice that aligns skills and education with the labour market.

The NWT Literacy Council is very pleased to be able to contribute in a meaningful way to improving adult education in the NWT.

¹ Aurora College. *The Drumbeat of Success: Highlights from the NWT Northern Adult Basic Education (NABE) Program 2012-2016*.

Family Literacy Day Around the NWT

The 19th annual National Family Literacy Day was January 27, 2018. ABC Life Literacy Canada started Family Literacy Day in 1999 to celebrate various forms of literacy with parents, children, and other family members at home and in their communities.

This year our theme was “Learn at Play”, combining the importance of having fun with learning together as a family. Celebrations were held throughout the Northwest Territories. Here are some of the highlights reported to us.

The NWT Centennial Library and the Literacy Society in Hay River gave away books at the local Super A grocery store. A family reading event at Hay River’s Harry Camsell Elementary School brought more than 150 students and parents together, along with Rufus the school mascot. Books were given away for prizes.

The Centre for Northern Families in Yellowknife celebrated with participants at their two weekly Healthy Babies programs and their Young Parents with Bright Futures program.

The YWCA NWT Family Centre celebrated with a book swap. Weledeh Catholic School welcomed 120 children and parents to their successful Family Fun night on January 25.

The Yellowknives Dene First Nation Wellness Department incorporated a National Family Literacy Day celebration into their regular Family Nights in Dettah and Ndilo. Mildred Hall School in Yellowknife celebrated National Family Literacy Day with a “Wear a Word” day, giving out prizes to students with the most words, as well as the class with the most words.

The Fort McPherson Community Library attracted 25 people to their celebration with a lunch, scavenger hunt, crafts, and many more fun activities. In Ulukhaktok, 60 community members played Scattegories, and used our new bookmarks to make “No Cook Play Dough” and “Let’s Make Lemonade”.

The John Tsetso Memorial Library in Fort Simpson held a Teddy Bear Picnic with reading, snacks, crafts, and door prizes with 47 community members. Tuktoyaktuk hosted a Pajama Play and Pizza Day celebration on January 27. Children First in Inuvik brought together 60 people, from newborns to elders, for their celebration.

National Family Literacy Day fell on the same day this year that the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre celebrated their Festival of Silliness in Yellowknife. Everyone had fun at the performances, and during intermission, playing in the bouncy castle, eating popcorn, and having their face painted. Charlotte Upton and Christine Barker, along with Christine’s daughter, Madison, used the recipes on the NWT Literacy Council’s new bookmarks to make 70 batches of “No Cook Play Dough” and 40 cups of “Let’s Make Lemonade”. We also gave away dozens of mini-books.



Making Connections with Newcomers



Our new program for immigrant families is four months old and the participants have given us much to think about. The Integration Literacy Program goal is to provide non-formal literacy and English language learning opportunities for permanent residents of Canada.

We have cooked, hiked, played games, cross-country skied, attended a cultural event at the museum, made music together, and gathered to chat. The theme that runs through all the activities is the desire for connection.

The activities are a vehicle for conversation in English and participants share their stories and learn about life in Canada. They find out that they have things in common, regardless of where they came from. It is a beautiful thing for people from diverse backgrounds to realize that they

have a lot to share with each other and a basis for connection. Some long-time Yellowknifers volunteer to help with activities and share their experiences to enrich the conversations.

“I’ve learned many things from the program participants,” says the program coordinator, Karen Johnson. “On the practical side, this includes how to count in Mandarin and how to wash chicken meat. I am grateful to experience the value of shared connections.”

The interests of immigrants vary. We have been asked questions about good places to explore outside of the city, what berries are good to pick, and questions about the local culture. Some people want to know more about Indigenous culture. There are specific questions about getting jobs or doing volunteer work too. We held an information session on how to pack healthy snacks and lunches for children to take to school.

Each Thursday in January, we invited people to a Music Circle, led by Mary Kelly. The group included mothers and young children. On the last evening, we shared our individual wishes as we sang this song:

“Wish, oh wish, wish you could
hear our wishes
Wish oh wish, wish you could
hear our wishes
Wish you could hear us sing
Our wish for what tomorrow brings
Wish you could hear us sing
Our wish for what tomorrow brings”

The wishes ranged from a bigger place

to live, to see my mother, to be a dinosaur (from a singularly-focused 3-year-old), to have a friend (earnestly said by a 6-year-old boy), and for safety and security for all people.

As immigrants, these individuals left their home countries for various reasons, in search of a different and better life in Canada. Karen says she feels honoured to provide activities to help program participants adjust to life in Yellowknife and to see their confidence grow.

“I spent six months in India when I was in my early 20s so I have experienced some of the challenges of living in another culture. I realize now that it is an even bigger leap to immigrate to another country,” says Karen. “When people come here to live permanently, they are making a long-term commitment to our country and a very different lifestyle. As good as life may be in Canada, many immigrants miss every day the extended families they left behind.”



Literacy Champions Honoured

During NWT Literacy Week, Pam Walsh, with the South Slave Divisional School Board, received a NWT Literacy Champion Award from the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. The youth literacy award was given to Myles Barry, of Yellowknife. A former Aurora College instructor in Inuvik, Tiffany Dwyer, received the educator award. Scott Atigikoak received the Council of the Federation literacy learner award for 2017. The awards are a feature of the annual Learners' Luncheon in Yellowknife during NWT Literacy Week.



Family Literacy Happenings

It's been another exciting fall here at the Literacy Council for our Family Literacy staff and facilitators. We welcomed Christine Barker to our staff to work with us for several months. Christine brought a variety of valuable experiences and interesting insights to our program and we're very lucky to have her on board.

At the invitation of the NWT Department of Health and Social Services we participated in Health and Wellness Fairs this fall and early winter in Tsiigehtchic, Fort Liard, Jean Marie River, Déline, Nahanni Butte, Tulita, Katl'odeeche, Ndilo, Dettah, and Colville Lake.

We received funding from Diavik Diamond Mine to support literacy in the communities where their NWT employees are based. In October we visited Łutselk'e. We'll also be going to the Tłıchǫ communities as well as Ndilo and Dettah to give away books and host family literacy events and activities.

Literacy Matters | Spring 2018

With funding again this year from the Government of the Northwest Territories Healthy Choices Fund, we repeated our project called, *Dream, Play, Grow*. The goal of the project is to give NWT parents resources to welcome their new babies and help give babies a strong foundation in literacy development. We partnered with existing Baby Bag and Baby Box programs at NWT birthing centers to provide baby books and NWT Literacy Council resources. This year we've ordered six new books for the program.

With funding from the Healthy Children's Initiative we were able to go to Fort Providence in October to host *Talking Books* training. Nine participants from the Aboriginal Head Start programs from the Káít'odeeche First Nation and Fort Providence attended. The training was also available to community members and focused on developing ideas and using appropriate technology for *Talking Books*. We also looked at how to incorporate Indigenous languages.

In November, 24 participants from Akalvik, Déline, Fort Good Hope, Fort Liard, Fort Simpson, Hay River, Łutselk'e, Ndilo, and Yellowknife took part in our annual Family Literacy Training Institute. The dedication of this year's group was obvious from the start with travel itineraries that included ice roads, taxis, planes and even helicopter rides just to get here! Participants learned to facilitate some of the family literacy programs that we have developed over the years. We did workshops on Introduction to Family Literacy, Choosing Books, Baby Brain and Language Development, *1-2-3 Rhyme with Me*, *Story Time Adventures*, and *Science Fun*.

If you want to take part in NWT Literacy Council training, sign up for our weekly *Literacy This Week* email newsletter to learn about training dates and locations. Watch for information about our Family Literacy Training Institute in 2018. Applications will be accepted near the end of the summer. More than 60 people applied to attend training this year, so once the application opens, apply early!

We ended 2017 with more exciting news about our Bison Bus mobile family literacy centre. Our Bison Bus fundraising campaign kicked off two years ago and we are close to being able to hit the road! Since the purchase of our bus the spring of 2017, we have teamed up with Hovat Construction to completely retrofit the interior. We now have shelving for books, benches, storage, and a table where families will be able to sit to play games, do crafts, and participate in other activities. In November we received a \$10,000 donation from 100 Men Who Give a Damn Yellowknife to go towards books and craft supplies for the Bison Bus. We look forward to getting on the road this summer.

In February we shared information about our *Granny and Grandpa Talking Bags* at the NWT Teachers Association Conference in Yellowknife. We hope more people will be making talking bags to engage elders in telling stories to young families.





Building Skills Among Youth

The Skill Builders for Youth program re-engages youth, 15-29 years old, in learning through informal programs that strengthen literacy and essential skills. The NWT Literacy Council trains facilitators and supports them to deliver programs in communities across the NWT.

This year, communities chose from three different programs — *Telling Our Stories*, a digital literacy program; *Learning in the Kitchen*, a cooking, food safety, and nutrition-based program; and *Youth Literacy Nights*, a series of fun community events that support literacy and essential skills. They also had the option of drawing elements from all three programs to create one that was a good fit for their community.

We've funded 11 projects in nine different communities, and are supporting several other communities to get projects up and running for their youth.

In Fort McPherson, a Youth Literacy Nights series has been thoughtfully planned to pair with other community

events, resulting in a well-attended and very popular program. A new partnership between the Hay River Library and Kátł'odeeche First Nation helped to support weekly board game cafes, scrapbook sessions, and cooking workshops.

Deninu Kue First Nation incorporated traditional skills into their Youth Literacy Nights by focusing on pattern making and traditional crafts. Délne, and the Youth Unit in the North Slave Correctional Complex, took their learning into the kitchen and strengthened essential skills while learning new recipes.

Digital Literacy has been very popular this year, with five communities choosing to run *Telling Our Stories* programs.

The Inuvik Youth Centre spent several months working with youth to plan, film, edit, and produce their own short films. Technology and tradition are coming together in the Yellowknives Dene First Nation's project. Youth are interviewing elders and gathering video footage at an on-the-land camp. The videos will be compiled and presented at a community gathering.

At the beginning of January, our youth literacy coordinator, Emily Smith, travelled with the NWT Literacy Council's digital literacy kit to Tsiigehtchic to introduce and train community members to use our *Telling Our Stories* resource. She helped them plan some digital literacy programs for youth in the community. Now, youth in Tsiigehtchic have two great new programs to look forward to — a series of workshops creating videos that raise awareness about the impacts of climate change, and sessions for young parents on how to make videos to record their family's history. A big thank you to Sheri Burke, of Aurora College, for organizing this training on her last week in Tsiigehtchic!

This is year three of the *Skill Builders for Youth* project, which means it's time to do an evaluation. Though we continually evaluate our programs, we also conduct full program evaluations every three years. As part of this evaluation, we brought some of our *Skill Builders for Youth* facilitators to Yellowknife to get their feedback on the program, and think about ways we can improve it in the future.

The program is funded by the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Stay tuned for more information about upcoming *Skill Builders for Youth* training and funding opportunities by subscribing to our weekly email newsletter, *Literacy This Week*, or follow the NWT Literacy Council on [Facebook](#).



Learners Write

Thank you to Whitney Menicoche, of Fort Simpson, for this submission to *Literacy Matters*. Hopefully it's the first of many from NWT adult learners!

Two peas in a pod

By Whitney Menicoche

Growing up,
together we were,
together we weren't.

Fighting, arguing,
sisters we were
forgiving and forgetting.
Making peace,
survived battles.
“Who won arguments”,
borrowed clothes,
and unborrowed clothes,
sometimes the gloves came off!

Still to remember,
the sisterly love,
we have for one another.
Unconditional love.
Time away from each other,
unspoken apologies,
wounds healed, scars made
why couldn't we just apologize,
as friends do,
hours instead of months.
A sister thing, I suppose....

I don't know.

Two peas in a pod,
as children,
inseparable
she wore purple,
while I was in pink
twins people thought,
until we grew up.

Work and time sacrificed,
remembering to make a phone call,
a Facebook message,
a birthday card sent.
Separation creates distance,
unrealized.

Sisters would be her and I.
Family gatherings
I would always remember the
childlike crazy times
and the time well spent
and times to spend again.
My sister and I,
two peas in a pod. Always.

Author note:

I chose a free verse poem, because I like to extend and give more detail. I wrote about my sister and I, because it was the two of us a lot growing up. We fought, we had fun, but it was us against the world, at times. It felt like we were similar as children, but over the years I left my home town to work and my changes influenced our relationship. While my changes created arguments and distance, we were still the same when we came together; when it came down to being sisters and loving one another.

Celebrate Indigenous Languages in March and Every Day



We were apparently too quick with our story in the last issue of *Literacy Matters*, saying that NWT Indigenous Languages Month was moving to a month other than March. The Government of the NWT will continue to designate March as Indigenous Languages Month.

The coordinators of the NWT's Indigenous language communities talked about plans for celebrating Indigenous languages at an Indigenous Languages Network Gathering in November. The event was organized by the NWT Literacy Council to bring the coordinators for each language community together to share information about their activities and projects. Each coordinator brought a youth and an elder from their region to the gathering.

In addition, the coordinators discussed ways to revitalize Indigenous languages in their regions. One way to interest language learners is through music. During the gathering, musicians Paul Andrew and Miranda Currie led participants in interactive sessions where they could practice fun ways to effectively use music for teaching and learning Indigenous languages.

The NWT Commissioner for Official Languages, Shannon Gullberg, gave a presentation about the Official Languages Act and its limitations. In another

session, participants learned more about the mentor-apprenticeship approach to language learning from a representative of the First Peoples Cultural Council in British Columbia.

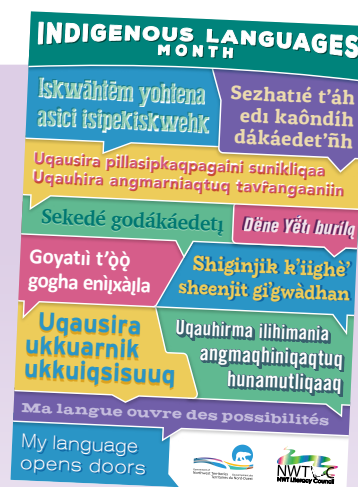
Finally, Gayle StrikesWithAGun updated participants on the Department of Education, Culture and Employment Indigenous languages curriculum. The curriculum is currently being piloted in NWT schools.

Who's Your Indigenous Language Role Model?

Tell us in a short video or photo about your Indigenous language role model for a chance to win a great prize.

How does your role model use their language to open doors in their work, and their community?

Go to our [website](#) or [Facebook](#) page for contest details.



Children First is an important economic force in Inuvik, with 12 full-time program staff as well as four-and-a-half support staff, including Patricia. It has an enrolment of 12 infants under the age of two years, 40 preschoolers, and 20 school-age children who are at the centre before and after school, lunch hours and on school holidays. The centre opens at 7:45 am and closes at 5:30 pm.

A board of directors, made up mostly of parents, governs the non-profit Children First Society.

“I’m proud that our staff and our programs can compare with any program across Canada,” says Patricia. We are at the forefront of the latest trends, for example risky play and rough and tumble play, that research tells us children need. We do a good job at implementing the emerging directions for early childhood education.”

On a typical day, children start arriving at 7:45 am and go to learning activity centres that are already set up. Each day children spend some time outdoors, weather permitting, and time in the building’s gym. They have snacks, full lunches, and quiet time in the afternoon.

Patricia and her staff developed several opportunities for community members who don’t have children enrolled, to still use the centre. On Wednesday morning a community drop-in program is open for children to bring an adult to play in the gym. On Tuesday afternoons there are Baby Moving sessions in partnership with the health authority for children aged two years and under. On Friday afternoons an intergenerational program sees elders come to the centre for activities and storytelling with the children. The centre has science activities on Thursdays for older children, aged three to five years, who bring an adult with them.

“We also try to have an activity on one weekend each month,” says Patricia. “In December we had children

bring their dads or another man for woodworking in the gym.”

“We have an active outdoor program. We have guest presenters and field trips.” Each June, the centre co-hosts a community event for International Mud Day.

Children First has a partnership with the early childhood education program at Aurora College. On a regular basis, students from the program come to the centre or the children visit the college. Another partnership, with speech language therapists and occupational therapists from the Inuvik Hospital, ensures that children at the centre are screened for any delays or other issues.

Since last spring, the Inuvik Aboriginal Head Start program is sharing space at the Children First centre which means parents don’t have to move their children from one program to another.

“Aboriginal Head Start got going in a different location before our centre opened and things have just worked out now for it to join us here, though that was always on our agenda,” says Patricia.

Children First has created a program to mesh with the East Three Elementary School new Junior Kindergarten. Children First staff members walk Junior Kindergarten students to the early childhood centre after school, or take them from the centre to Junior Kindergarten, providing seamless child care support for parents.

The Children First Centre has evolved in other ways too. “Our financial stability has improved,” says Patricia. The centre has benefitted from increases in funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and it hasn’t had unexpected major expenses recently. The centre was endangered in 2014 when problems with the building racked up unplanned expenses.

“The community was awesome. It really carried us through that period,” says Patricia. “We were very fortunate. The support from the community always blows me away. They are always there to help with solutions.”

At the same time community parents can go to work, and know that their child is cared for and getting the best opportunities for early childhood development.



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Become a Literacy Council Member

Literacy and essential skills touch all aspects of our lives.

Literacy and essential skills impact our social and economic well-being, our health, our families and our communities.

The NWT Literacy Council is committed to ensuring that all NWT residents have access to the literacy supports they need to:

- get jobs
- continue their education
- take care of their families
- participate fully in their communities

The NWT Literacy Council is a strong non-government literacy voice and service provider.

Why become a member of the NWT Literacy Council?

A strong network is key to creating solutions that address the complex issues of literacy and essential skills.

Your support is important to us.

Join the Literacy Council and strengthen the voice of our network of literacy workers and supporters across the NWT.

Literacy is everyone's business!

Yearly Dues

- Individual, \$10.00
- Family, \$20.00
- Organization, \$25.00

Membership dues can be waived on request, if necessary.

Donate Online

Donations are essential for the NWT Literacy Council's work.

You can donate online at www.nwtliteracy.ca or directly through Canada Helps.



It's easy and it's fast!



We're on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram!

Please search for NWT Literacy Council.

Keep in Touch!



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