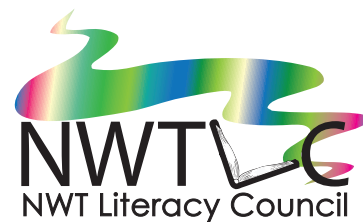


# Literacy Matters



FALL 2016



## English Skills are Key for New NWT Residents

One of the first things that newcomers to Canada want to do is to learn to speak and understand English if they are not already fluent. It's no different in the NWT, where we are becoming an increasingly multicultural society.

Classes and volunteers in Yellowknife help people learn English, but there are fewer opportunities in other parts of the NWT. Even in the capital there are gaps in services. How you come to Canada and your English skill level can affect your language-learning opportunities.

Perhaps the most well known English language learning service is the LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) program operated out of the Aurora College Yellowknife Campus. LINC is available only for refugees to Canada (forced to leave their home because of war or other disaster) and permanent residents (allowed to live in Canada indefinitely).

LINC in Yellowknife serves Levels 1-5. The Canadian Language Benchmarks is a 12-level system used to describe listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Immigrants

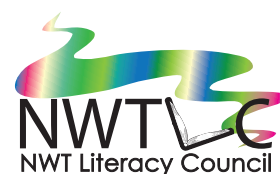
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President's Message: Ken Latour

# Support Your Library!



Happy August Everyone! I hope this newsletter finds you still enjoying our wonderful northern summer. We get so much sunlight and energy in the summer and there is such an abundance of animal and plant life that it is hard to imagine that in a couple months it will all be under snow.

I imagine most of you are like me and don't like to dwell on the coming darkness and cold, but it's always a good idea to think about what activities you might do during the winter to stay active and healthy. One of the best places you can take yourself and your family is to your local library.

Libraries occupy a very special place in any society, and there are good reasons for that. Not only are libraries a community hub and a place for fun learning activities for children and youth, but they are home to one of the world's most powerful technologies: writing. It is a little odd to think of this when we exist in a world of touch screens and social media, but the technology that all of these other technologies are built on is nothing other than writing, a technology that was developed over 5,000 years ago.

Writing as a technology cannot be underestimated. It gradually transformed our world by making it easier to transmit ideas over time and space and for people to build on the ideas of others. Eventually, it brought us into this current information age, where ideas can travel around the world faster than we can.

Libraries serve as a place for us to access and engage with the writings of some of the best minds of our world, but they do more. They also serve as a symbol of the importance of writing in our society, and how writing and the exchange of ideas are the basis for our modern technological world.

These days, as governments across the country are under pressure to cut spending, libraries are at risk. This past spring, Newfoundland and Labrador announced the closing of more than half of its public libraries, 54 in total. Luckily, in the NWT, our government has a different approach and has opened six new community libraries in the last five years, bringing the NWT total to 26. That is something we can be happy and proud of. And something we can support, simply by going to our libraries. I encourage you to do that this fall and winter.

Before I sign off, I would like to say good-bye to two staff members who left us over the summer, Patricia Ilgok and Amanda Grobbeck. Both did a lot of good work for the council, and we are grateful for that and wish them well in the future. Returning to the council from parental leave is Katie Johnson who will be looking after youth and adult services, and the embedded literacy project we are working on jointly with our partner organizations in the other northern territories.

Have a wonderful fall; keep reading, and thank you to all of you who support literacy and the NWT Literacy Council.

# Mark Your Calendar Now!

## **International Literacy Day**

*September 8*

## **NWT Literacy Week**

*September 25-October 1*

## **Plain Language Day**

*October 13*

# NWT Literacy Council Training

## **Embedded Literacy for Youth**

*October 25-27*

## **Family Literacy Training Institute**

*November 21-25*

# Save Money and Paper!

We are committed to the wise use of our money and our natural resources, including paper.

Please send an email to [nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca](mailto:nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca) if you would like to receive *Literacy Matters* by email instead of a paper copy.

# Embedding Literacy and Essential Skills Across the North

The Northern Alliance for Literacy and Essential Skills (NALES) is a pan-territorial partnership. Its purpose is to enhance embedded literacy and essential skills in the three territories. The current NALES project is led by Ilitaqsiniq, the Nunavut Literacy Council, with the involvement of the Yukon Literacy Coalition and the NWT Literacy Council.

The goal of this project is to support northerners in each territory to build literacy and essential skills for work. Each literacy organization works with partners in their territory to embed literacy and essential skills into new or existing training and learning programs.

The project supports training in three different sectors or areas:

1. Tourism industry
2. Service industry
3. Traditional skill development

Many northerners face barriers to employment or training opportunities because of low skills. Essential skills can be increased through positive and meaningful learning and training opportunities. This project is an opportunity to work with territorial and local partners to develop or enhance training programs that help northerners prepare for and get jobs or access higher learning or education.

NALES is funded by the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, Employment and Social Development Canada.



# Check Out Our Resources!

Some of our resources are so popular we have updated and printed more copies. They are available on our website at [www.nwtliteracy.ca](http://www.nwtliteracy.ca).

Hard copies are free to NWT residents.

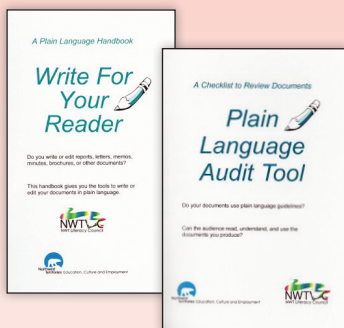
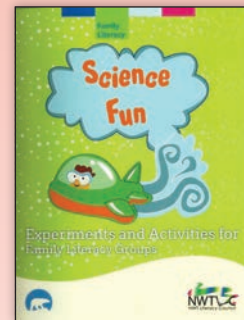


## Career-Life-Work Series

The *Career-Life-Work* series consists of six workbooks and four instructor manuals to help learners get ready for the workplace.

## Science Fun

*Science Fun* is full of easy and fun experiments and activities for families and family literacy programs across the NWT. They are aimed at pre-schoolers.



## Write For Your Reader and Plain Language Audit Tool

*Write For Your Reader* and the *Plain Language Audit Tool* are essential resources for writers.

## StoryWalk® Kits to Borrow

Our three *StoryWalk*® kits give instructions for setting up your own outdoor reading adventure, along with laminated pages of the book and activities. You can borrow kits for these three books: *The Littlest Sled Dog*, *Kumak's River* and *The Moose Who Almost Got Me*.





# Sharing Elders' Knowledge Through **Granny and Grampa Talking Bags**

*Inspired by Mary Rose Sundberg of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Granny and Grampa Talking Bags are designed to help elders reclaim their roles as mentors and teachers.*

*Granny and Grampa Talking Bags* will help make elders' wisdom and knowledge more accessible to families and community programs. They will help elders to connect with children through storytelling and songs, and to share language and traditional skills. Each talking bag might include a grandmother doll, a grandfather doll, stuffed animals, toys, and samples of clothing and tools that represent each NWT Indigenous culture. Children can interact with these objects while listening to stories and songs from their elders.

The NWT Literacy Council is inviting six elders to a workshop this fall to design and create a bag culturally appropriate to their region. We've created a sample Granny and Grampa Talking Bag to help guide elders as they develop their own bags. Our sample bag represents the Inuvialuit culture in the Beaufort Delta Region. It includes a hand-sewn grandmother and grandfather doll, a beluga whale, and an ulu.

During the workshop, elders will decide the kinds of

items to include in their bags, what materials they need, how to use the bags effectively, and where to keep them in their communities. The elders will shape this project by sharing their ideas, and taking the lead to develop and use *Granny and Grampa Talking Bags*. When the elders return to their communities they will act as mentors to other elders, families, family literacy programs, and organizations by demonstrating how to use the bags.

This project is intended to help elders feel included in their communities, involve them with family literacy programs, and bring attention to their importance in the learning process for younger generations. Our hope is that children will benefit through the opportunity to learn more about their culture, language, and traditions at home, and in community programs.

The Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program funds the project.



# What's Happening in **Family Literacy**



This winter we tried out a new activity — StoryWalk®. We created activity stations outdoors related to books we read to children in Fort Providence and Ndilo. We tested out our materials and you can now borrow them. If you want to host a StoryWalk® in your community email [charlotte@nwtliteracy.ca](mailto:charlotte@nwtliteracy.ca) or call the office at 867-873-9262, or toll free at 1-866-599-6758. You'll find a StoryWalk® is a pleasant way for children and adults to read a book while enjoying the outdoors and some physical activity.

In May, Sandhya Koirala, the Assistant Librarian at Inuvik Centennial Library, and our Family Literacy Coordinator, Charlotte Upton, went to the Centre for Family Literacy Training

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Institute 2016 in Calgary. The workshops they went to included: *Storysacks*, *B.O.O.K.S.*, and *Introduction to Family Literacy*. It was a great opportunity to connect with early childhood providers from all across Alberta.

Once again, we participated in *Yes We Care Day* at Northern United Place in Yellowknife in May. The event provides free haircuts, food, and information to lower-income residents. There were booths with information about such topics as nutrition, legal aid, and dental hygiene. We had a family literacy table where families could do arts and crafts. We gave away kits with a story book and planting activity that parents or grandparents could take home to their children.

Our summer students, Danita Frost-Arey and Nathan Denroche, along with our Executive Director, Kathryn Barry Paddock, went to Fort Providence for the Aboriginal Head Start's end-of-year celebration. They took along activities such as bubble snakes, goop, and rockets to share with the parents, children, and staff. We're happy to get invited to this event each year.

Charlotte and Danita ran family literacy workshops in Kát'odeeche in June. The staff members of the Aboriginal Head Start program and community members from Hay River participated in *Introduction to Family Literacy*, *1-2-3 Rhyme with Me*, *Storytime Adventures*, and *Brain and Language Development* workshops.

Every Tuesday night this summer, Nathan organized family literacy activities, crafts, and games for families to enjoy together at the Yellowknife Farmers Market. Our Book Mobile continues to be a popular attraction there for people of all ages looking for a free book to take home.

The Book Mobile was part of Yellowknife's Canada Day Parade too. Then at Somba K'e Park, we gave away free books and offered arts and crafts activities and a scavenger hunt for families to do together. The Book Mobile also made an appearance at the Old Town Ramble and Ride festival over the August long weekend.

Once again we participated in the NWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment's Early Childhood Symposium in August. We presented material from *1-2-3 Rhyme with Me* and enjoyed getting a chance to meet more early childhood providers from all around the territories.

Over the spring and summer we did some training, produced and piloted StoryWalk® materials, and promoted family literacy at lots of different events.





## Indigenous Language Activists Share and Learn

There were two opportunities this spring for NWT Indigenous language champions to share ideas, learn, and be inspired.

The NWT Literacy Council brought the regional Indigenous language community coordinators together in April, along with two other people, including one youth, from each language group. As a result of the Literacy Council gathering, regional groups will try to increase the impact of Aboriginal Languages Month by coordinating promotion efforts across the NWT.

Then in June, language activists, learners, educators, and linguists from around North America participated in the much larger Dene Languages Conference in Yellowknife. Congratulations to the Yellowknives Dene First Nation for hosting this conference and the Goyatıkò Language Society who organized it, along with the Alaska Native Language Centre.

At both gatherings, people shared language revitalization best practices. People are using everything from on-the-land immersion camps to the most modern technology and social media to keep Dene languages alive. Others are focused on documenting their language and cultural history.

There were youth panels at both events, as language activists grapple with the best ways to encourage language learning among young people.

## Become a Member Before Our Annual Meeting

One of the benefits of NWT Literacy Council membership is being able to run and vote for our Board of Directors.

Our annual general meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 1, 2016 in Yellowknife. If you want to become a regional representative on our board, or vote for one, become a member. Our current board members are listed on page 16, along with our membership fees.

Only members of the NWT Literacy Council can vote for our board of directors. It's a good reason to join our organization if you haven't already.

It's easy. Click on the *Join Us* button on our website homepage at [www.nwtliteracy.ca](http://www.nwtliteracy.ca) to find our membership form and a link to online payment. Or, contact us at [nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca](mailto:nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca) or 1-866-599-6758.

## Write for us!

We are always looking for submissions to Literacy Matters and for our weekly electronic newsletter, *Literacy This Week*.

And, we welcome guest bloggers for our website blog!

Got a literacy-related issue you want to write about? Is something happening in your community that more people should know about? Contact us at

[nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca](mailto:nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca)



# Youth Complete Skill-building Projects

March saw the end of another year of successful Skill Builders for Youth projects. In October 2015, leaders from various communities came to Yellowknife for Literacy and Essential Skills training. They then went back to their communities to run skill-building projects with local youth. Each project was different and based on the interests of the community youth.

Feedback from participants shows that they thoroughly enjoyed the learning experience and hope the projects will continue.

Tulita's program was hugely successful. Youth made drums, mittens, did beading, and did an art project with a local artist. While the focus was on teaching these technical skills, youth also spent time learning how to make a budget, and promote, and sell their products. Elders worked with the youth in both English and North Slavey, giving the youth an opportunity to improve their language skills. Many of the youth commented that they felt 'more confident in a group'. This group hopes to find additional funding to continue their project.

Deline's project was eight weeks long, with a different sewing project each week. Elder Camilla Tutcho taught the youth how to make things such as mitts, bullet bags, knife sets, packsacks, and mukluks. All the participants enjoyed the time learning, laughing, and speaking North Slavey with one another. They are all extremely proud of their work.

The participants in Deline's project learned new literacy and other foundational skills.

- They can follow instructions in a sewing machine manual.
- They understand how to adapt and cut out patterns for different sized children and adults.
- They know how to measure materials for the various patterns.

- They practiced speaking North Slavey to each other and to Camilla.
- They helped each other complete their projects.

Fort Providence is now sporting some great new t-shirts. Their silk screening project went well. Youth learned how to use the computer program, Photoshop, to design their shirts. They also used problem-solving skills with this project: on the day they were to do the printing, they found that some of their supplies were frozen. Some quick thinking had them able to still complete their project, just not in the way they originally planned!

At the North Slave Correctional Centre, youth made mittens and snowshoes. Youth were excited to learn more about their culture and to be able to pass on their new skills to the next generation.

Youth in Sachs Harbour based their project around muskox. A hunter from the community got two animals for the project to use. Participants learned how to dry and grind the meat and how to flesh the hide and dry it.

All of these projects give youth technical skills at the same time as they improve their academic skills. We look forward to funding new projects this coming year. Our training for community project leaders is scheduled for October 25-27, 2016 in Yellowknife.



# Hands-on Learning in Colville Lake



*The Construction Labourer Basics short course this past winter in Colville Lake was a roaring success for many reasons.*

It's not often that the community gets an end product from a training course, and one that the students and instructor, Jerry Huculak, can be proud of. In this case the finished project was a tiny home, revealed in March when it was removed from a warehouse by one of the students, heavy equipment operator, Dennis Blanco. The other learners were Jarrett Lafferty, Bernard Blanco, Stephanie Orlas, Barbara Blanco and Joseph Blanco.

The six-week course was 40/60 classroom and hands-on learning. Even in the classroom there was hands-on work. This balance created an enjoyable learning experience, especially for learners who may have been turned off by structured classroom learning in the past.

Visiting experts working in the construction field added to the course success, along with the Ayoni Keh

Land Corporation's interest in training students in the construction field.

There were a few challenges, of course. Those included cold winter weather and not being able to use power tools, since no one was certified to teach their use.

"It was also challenging working around the work schedules of the students to make sure each of them completed the objectives," says Jerry. "But, I would recommend this course to others, though access to tools and a workshop is a must.

"There are no plans to do this course again however I am sure this would be welcomed by the community members.

Construction Labourer Basics is one of several short courses the NWT Literacy Council developed for Aurora College.



# 1000 Books Before Kindergarten

The NWT Literacy Council and the Yellowknife Public Library will launch a new program this fall to encourage parents and caregivers to give children an early literacy lift.

We'll be challenging families to read 1000 books to your child before they start kindergarten. If you commit to reading one book a night, you will have read 365 books in one year, 730 in two years, and 1,095 books in three years.

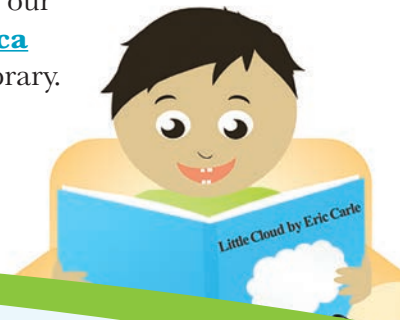
There are so many benefits to reading to children. Reading helps children develop language and literacy skills and creates special times together.

## How to Get Started:

1. Read with your child. Your child's early literacy development starts at home.
2. Keep track of the books you read with your child. Record them using a journal or by using the *1000 Books Before Kindergarten* log sheet. You can repeat books.

3. Every 100 books read is a milestone. To receive rewards and participate in our program, print the "I read \_\_\_ books".PDF document from our website and post a photo on Facebook of your child holding their achievement with the hashtag #1000BooksNWT and we will enter your child's name into a prize draw.
4. Complete your journey. Once you've reached 1000 books, your child will receive a certificate of completion and recognition from the NWT Literacy Council and the Yellowknife Public Library.

The program launches September 1, 2016. By then you will find materials for *1000 Books Before Kindergarten* on our website at [www.nwtliteracy.ca](http://www.nwtliteracy.ca) or at the Yellowknife Public Library.



## Bison Bus Update

### We're halfway to funding our Bison Bus!

For the past year we've been raising money to purchase a small school bus and fill it with books, toys, and craft supplies for family literacy programs and to give away. Hopefully by next summer our Bison Bus will be rumbling down NWT highways to spread the message of family literacy.

You can donate to the Bison Bus through our website ([www.nwtliteracy.ca](http://www.nwtliteracy.ca)). When you get to the secure Canada Helps website, specify that your donation is for the Bison Bus.

We're hosting a Bison Bus fundraising event in Yellowknife this fall during NWT Literacy Week. Keep an eye out for the details in our *Literacy This Week* email newsletter, on social media and elsewhere. Please come out and support this very worthwhile project.



# Come to Our Literacy Training



*Do you want to find out how you can encourage families to learn and share together? Here's your opportunity...*

Our annual Family Literacy Training Institute will take place on November 21-25, 2016. This popular training is open to early childhood workers, librarians, teachers, and anyone else who works with families.

Family Literacy Training is lots of fun. It includes these workshops:

- *Introduction to Family Literacy:* We will explore the meaning of family literacy: how everyday activities such as cooking, making crafts, and spending time together are literacy experiences for children.
- *1-2-3 Rhyme with Me:* This is a fun, interactive rhyming and singing program for young children and their parents. You will learn new rhymes, songs, and felt stories that support children's oral language development.

- *Baby Brain and Language Development:* This is an introduction to early brain development and its relationship to language development. You will learn the important impact the first three years of a child's life has on their future development.
- *Family Literacy Nights:* These nights are a great way to start family literacy programs in your community. Everyone will have time to plan programming for their community.

We cover travel costs for participants. Spaces are limited, so register now and join us at Northern United Place in Yellowknife.

Check our website or contact Charlotte at [charlotte@nwtliteracy.ca](mailto:charlotte@nwtliteracy.ca), 873-9262 or toll free 1-866-599-6758, for more information and for a registration package.



# Explore Your Relationship With Technology

During NWT Literacy Week, September 25-October 1!

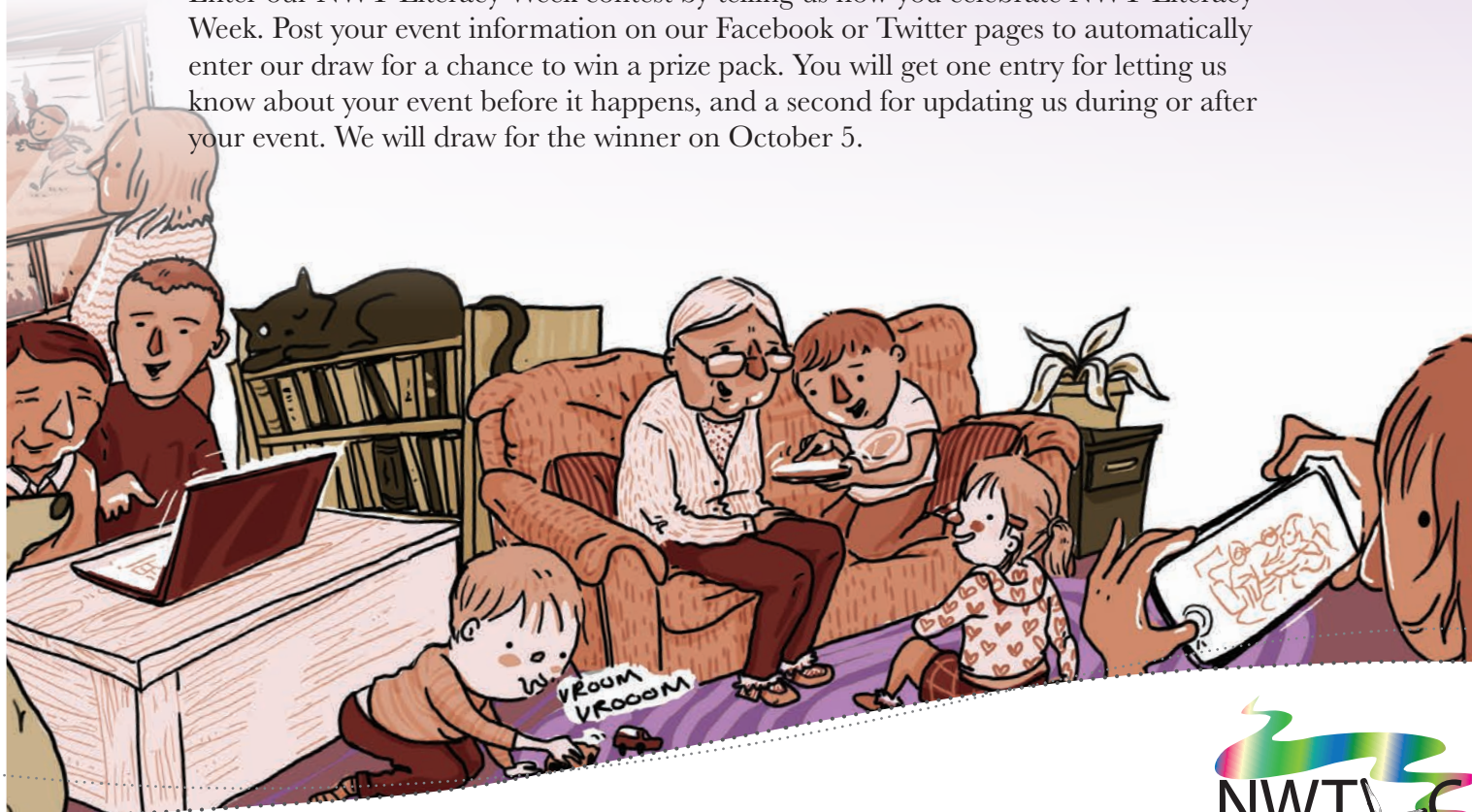
This year our NWT Literacy Week theme is *Tied to Tech*.

Take a week to think about and explore your relationship with technology. How do you use technology with your children? What about at work? How do you find a balance between the helpful nature of technology and the addictive quality of devices? All of these are questions to think about.

Here are some ideas for celebrating NWT Literacy Week: high tech, low tech and no tech!

- Have a tech-free dinner with your family or friends.
- Host a digital literacy night and create digital stories.
- Host a spelling bee to see which words you can spell without auto-correct.
- Download and use a new Indigenous language app.
- Host a family literacy night.
- Read up on how to protect yourself from online scams.

Enter our NWT Literacy Week contest by telling us how you celebrate NWT Literacy Week. Post your event information on our Facebook or Twitter pages to automatically enter our draw for a chance to win a prize pack. You will get one entry for letting us know about your event before it happens, and a second for updating us during or after your event. We will draw for the winner on October 5.



## ...continued from page 1

need a minimum level four certificate as proof of English proficiency to get Canadian citizenship. And getting into a level 1 class requires some basic proficiency. During the past school year, 47 students came through the Yellowknife LINC program at the various levels.

A visit to the LINC class shows immediately that the instructor, Lynne Zentner, loves her work.

“It’s very rewarding. They are all here to learn English, and they are keen. Attendance is never a problem. They’re adults. And I get to work with and learn from people from all over the world.”

“Everything depends on language,” says one of her students, Androya Sanchez. Androya came to Canada with a university degree, but English fluency is her gateway to literacy in Canada — being able to participate fully and thrive in her new country.

“We need to improve our English to continue our education, get work, and to have the ability to communicate in the community,” notes Ali Mohamud.

“If we couldn’t come to this class, learning and speaking up would be even harder. We have a great teacher so it is safe here to try to speak English. We need the vocabulary to be able to express our feelings and share our thoughts,” says Ali.

Ali joined a brother already in Yellowknife, coming to Canada with eight other siblings and his mother. He and three of his sisters in the LINC program all have jobs, mostly in the service industry, where “work helps a lot to improve our English,” says his sister, Nimo. Employers often adjust work hours to accommodate the LINC classes.

There are some other options for people who are in Canada as caregivers or on temporary foreign worker permits.

LINC students, temporary foreign workers, live-in caregivers and anyone else wanting to improve their English can join an informal, two-hour weekly gathering with volunteer English speakers each Saturday at a Yellowknife coffee shop. Jestine Amora, who coordinates the Aurora College Integration Office, recruits and supports other volunteers to provide one-on-one English conversation practice with learners at times that are mutually convenient.

“Getting a job is the top priority for most people who come to see me, so that makes learning English a top priority. If they can’t take classes because of child care responsibilities or their job, we match them with a volunteer or to the LINC online courses,” says Justine.



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People can take LINC courses online or by correspondence. Weekly phone calls with an instructor are included in the course and learners can also get support from Yellowknife volunteers. The online learning goes up to level 7, beyond that available in Yellowknife LINC classes.

Jestine estimates that five or six students in Yellowknife, Hay River and Inuvik are taking these courses. “And LINC classes and LINC online are all free,” she says.

There is one other alternative in Yellowknife, but it costs money. The Collège nordique francophone offers an English language evening course. There is only one class a week and it is for “more advanced” students, says instructor, Rosie Benning. “Our emphasis is to cater to student needs and their goals in life.”

The motivation for most students taking this course is work related, says Rosie. They may need to improve their English for job advancement. This course is also good for people who do not meet the LINC criteria, such as Canadian francophones.

There are no classes in Yellowknife for newcomers who are unable to understand or communicate in English at all, though one-on-one tutoring can help with this client group. In other parts of the NWT, things are more limited.

Jennifer Rafferty, who teaches at Inuvik’s Caribou Outreach Learning Centre at the Aurora College campus taught English as a second language for three years. She is unable to continue because of other demands on her time, such as adult literacy and basic education courses. She says the best part of teaching English as a second language was “seeing students improve and those language skills allow them to connect more with the community.”

In Hay River, the Centennial Public Library provided English classes until recently. The Aurora College Community Learning Centre is awaiting word on its application for funding to take over the service in Hay River.

Acquiring Canadian citizenship is another motivation for learning English. Unfortunately, in the NWT assessment of the necessary English language fluency is available only in Yellowknife.

There are increasing numbers of new residents in the NWT needing English as a second language learning. This is creating more demand for services, services that cost money and are not currently funded.

# Staff Changes at the Council

Two students brought new energy and ideas to our office this summer.

Nathan Denroche worked on special projects and organized family literacy activities each week at the Yellowknife Farmers Market. Nathan returns this fall to the Bachelor of Science Program at Vancouver Island University.

Danita Frost-Arey returns this fall to the Aurora College Social Work Program. She got us started on a project to develop kits that facilitate involving elders more actively in community family literacy programs.

We wish them both well in their studies.

Sadly we lost two staff members this spring and summer. We wish our long-time Family Literacy Coordinator, Patricia Ilgok, and Amanda Grobbeck, Youth Services Coordinator, the best of luck in their future lives and thank them for all their contributions and hard work.

Katie is back from maternity leave. Don’t be confused by the name change from Randall to Johnson. Katie got married while on leave. Her email is the same: [katie@nwtliteracy.ca](mailto:katie@nwtliteracy.ca)



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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](http://www.nwtliteracy.ca) or directly through Canada Helps.



It's easy and it's fast!



We're on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube!

Please search for  
NWT Literacy Council.

## Keep in Touch!



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