

Literacy Matters

FALL 2017

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Achieving the

High School Diploma Milestone

Why bother getting a high school diploma as an adult if it's not necessary for post-secondary school programs?

A diploma holds meaning and is made possible through the Adult Recognition Model developed by Aurora College in response to student requests.

For some students the high school diploma is a milestone. It's part of role modeling to their children the importance of education, hard work and achieving goals. For Robert Voudrach it was a matter of "challenging myself and becoming eligible for scholarships," that helped with his post-secondary education.

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



President's Message: Ken Latour

Physical Literacy For All Ages



A theme at the NWT Literacy Council this year is physical literacy. It is a fairly new term to describe the basic knowledge, skills, and motivation we all need to be physically active for life.

Like other terms in the literacy field, there are many definitions for physical literacy, but we have chosen to keep it simple. We can look at this new literacy in a variety of ways. To begin with, we all have a body, and each of us needs to know our body and its needs so that we can keep that body working for a long time. Most of us will not become Olympic athletes, and might not participate in sports, but life is still demanding. We all use our bodies every day in order to get things done and enjoy our lives.

Understanding our bodies' need for good food is important, especially these days when there are many poor food choices easily available. Sleep is another key ingredient to having a healthy body; the more we learn about sleep the more we see how a good night's sleep is vital to our physical, mental and emotional health..

Activities like stretching and low impact exercises, such as walking and

swimming, keep our bodies nimble and working when we need them. For instance, today I plan to move 30 wheelbarrow loads of dirt in my backyard. I'm hoping that all the gardening and other activities I've done this summer ensure that I won't hurt myself doing this work.

Indigenous games were developed to keep people physically literate so that they could be safe and successful on the land as they travelled and hunted. Traditional Indigenous life demanded high levels of physical literacy. Physical literacy helps adults of all ages. For instance, it can make it easier to get on the floor to play more actively with children. Physical literacy is for everyone, no matter their age or ability. It's critical to counteract the sedentary lifestyles encouraged by our digital world.

The NWT Literacy Council is doing its part to promote physical literacy. The Council is developing resources that people can use to promote and develop physical literacy. Some will be sent out to support NWT Literacy Week this fall. In keeping with the Council's belief that much learning comes through play, the resources will help people engage themselves, their families and their communities

in fun activities that strengthen physical literacy. We hope you enjoy them.

Our family literacy coordinator, Charlotte Upton, wrote a blog in April about the connection between physical literacy and reconciliation. She brings up some ideas about how we can incorporate cultural activities like dancing and games into physical literacy activities in communities. You can read her blog at www.nwtliteracy.ca.

The Council also sponsored an Inuit Games event this summer where people could try different games. Thanks to athlete, Veronica McDonald, for making this an interactive activity. Give us a call if you want ideas to improve your physical literacy.

Have a wonderful, active autumn. I look forward to updating you in the springtime on the Council's work.

Upcoming Events

International Literacy Day

September 8

NWT Literacy Council Annual General Meeting

September 16

NWT Literacy Week

September 24-30

Plain Language Day

October 13

Family Literacy Training Institute

November 27-30

Family Literacy Day

January 27

NWT Indigenous Languages Month

February

Write for Us!

We are always looking for contributions to our weekly blog and email newsletter, *Literacy This Week*, as well as to *Literacy Matters*.

We offer a small honorarium for blogs.

If you are interested, contact nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca.

Feedback is Welcome!

We love to hear from you about our workshops, website, publications. Perhaps you should check out all our wonderful resources on our website.

This reader likes them.

"I want to thank you for the excellent resources you have made available online. I greatly appreciate their clear layout/format and content."

Joanne Davenport
HS Career Access teacher, Nova Scotia

New Program for Newcomers

The NWT Literacy Council is delivering a new program this fall. We'll offer non-formal language and literacy activities to permanent residents in Yellowknife.

The Federal Government's Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is funding the program. We are hiring an Integration Literacy Coordinator to work with newcomers in Yellowknife. The Coordinator will identify literacy and language needs for permanent residents of all ages. We expect to offer family literacy activities such as family fun nights, music makers, and physical literacy fun at the local fieldhouse. Adult activities, such as community kitchens and parenting groups, will also take place, as well as special events for youth.

Our family literacy staff members have noticed a steady increase in newcomer families to our special events in the city. The program will encourage English language and literacy learning through non-formal interactions such as play, singing songs and communicating with other families while taking part in everyday social interactions relevant to their needs.

Non-formal programs are community-based, more flexible (but still well-organized by a qualified facilitator) and in this case, family focused. These programs will respond to the needs of the group, and be driven by people's interests. If the group is interested in a rhyming or singing program such as *1-2-3 Rhyme with Me*, or a science-based program such as *Science Fun!*, these can be worked into the schedule.

Everyone at the Literacy Council looks forward to working with newcomers in Yellowknife.

What's Happening in Family Literacy

The family literacy team has been busy with exciting new projects as well as our annual activities and events!

With funding from the NWT Department of Health and Social Services' Healthy Choices Fund, we were able to start a new project called ***Dream, Play, Grow***. The goal of the project is to give NWT parents resources to welcome their new babies and help them give babies a strong foundation in literacy development. We partnered with existing Baby Bag and Baby Box programs at NWT birthing centers by providing baby books and NWT Literacy Council resources. Our contribution to each birthing center was 19 books for each baby, plus Indigenous language books for their region. We're happy to say that we've received funding to continue this project next year.

We continued our visits to the Centre for Northern Families' Pre-Natal and Healthy Mom and Baby

programs as well as visits to Aurora College's Family Night on Campus in Yellowknife. We give free books to the families that attend and lead a literacy-related craft or activity. We were also invited to Ndilo to participate in a parent night hosted by the Aboriginal Head Start Program and the Wellness Centre's Mama and Bebia program.

In April, family literacy staff members, Charlotte Upton and Emily Smith, headed south to attend Sports for Life's ***International Physical Literacy Conference*** in Toronto. Some of our favourite sessions included Physical Literacy for the Early Years and Reconciliation and Physical Literacy. This conference helped us develop a better understanding of physical literacy, and we're excited to use this knowledge to create new and



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interesting family literacy resources. We look forward to sharing some of what we learned during NWT Literacy Week in September — the theme will be physical literacy!

We also had the pleasure of attending the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Public Health Association's **Working Together to Keep Northern Kids Healthy Symposium** in Yellowknife in May. We met new early childhood educators from around the territory, and saw some familiar faces. Learning about the different programs taking place around the Northwest Territories and Nunavut helped us to identify possible future partnerships.

During Earth Week, we partnered with Ecology North to host a StoryWalk® based on the book *Up in the Garden, Down in the Dirt*, by Kate Messner. We also created a **StoryWalk®** for the book, *How Raven Returned the Sun*, by Christal Doherty, in partnership with the NorthWords Writers Festival. Both StoryWalks® are popular and we've lent them to several NWT communities already. These and our other StoryWalks® (*Kumak's River*, *The Littlest Sled Dog*, and *The Moose Who Almost Got Me*) can be borrowed from the NWT Literacy Council.

We ran our second photo contest for **1000 Books Before Kindergarten** throughout the month of May. The contest was very popular with more entries from more communities than the last time we ran the contest. We love to see so many families get excited about reading! Keep an eye on our social media and weekly *Literacy This Week* email newsletter for another contest in the fall.

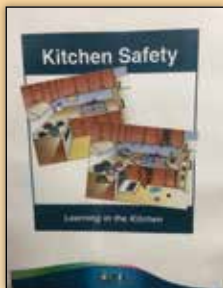
Every Tuesday this summer, we attended the **Yellowknife Farmers Market** along with our Indigenous Literacy Coordinator, Danita Frost-Arey. Each week we helped families do an activity, game, or craft. Many families also visited our Bookmobile every week to check out our fresh selection of free books. On Canada Day we also had activities for families including a scavenger hunt, bubble station, and bean bag toss and gave away more free books.

With funding from the NWT Recreation and Parks Association we held a **Get Active** event in Somba K'e Park in Yellowknife. Athlete Veronica McDonald hosted an interactive Inuit Games demonstration. This was a very popular event for families with many people trying out the different games and winning prizes for participation.

We're already making plans for the annual **Family Literacy Training Institute** on November 27–30 in Yellowknife. Watch our [website](#) or social media for the registration form and more information.



Check Out Our Resources!



Learning in the Kitchen

Our *Skill Builders for Youth* resource, *Learning in the Kitchen* is a seven-module program resource covering the topics of kitchen safety, food safety, nutrition for health, the importance of food, reading food labels, smart shopping, and nutrition games. *Learning in the Kitchen* incorporates activities and cooking skills with hands-on literacy and essential skills (LES) embedded in the information.

Granny and Grampa Talking Bags

The elders who took our Granny and Grampa Talking Bag workshop developed talking bags for most of the NWT regions. You can borrow these bags to promote culture and language learning within early childhood programs by using elders as mentors and teachers. Contact us for information about availability and how to borrow these talking bags.



StoryWalk® Kits to Borrow

We have two new StoryWalks® available to family literacy programs. You can now borrow *Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt*, by Kate Messner, and *How Raven Returned the Sun*, by NWT author Christal Doherty, and illustrated by Carla Turner. Check our community and family resources at www.nwtliteracy.ca to see the other StoryWalk® kits available.



Soaring Eagle Receives Funding Boost

Congratulations to the Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre in Hay River. In the last issue of Literacy Matters we told you about the Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre's essential and employment skills program in Hay River.

Since then it received \$1,276,000 over three years from Service Canada to source employment opportunities in Hay River, and work with employers to train local people for those jobs.

The funding started in April. The first participants took safety courses and trained in carpentry skills on a local job site for five weeks. The local employer, Concept Energy, hired half the trainees. The company receives a wage subsidy to cover continued training costs for its new employees.

Shari Caudron, Soaring Eagle's executive director, says the friendship centre is researching the labour market and will continue with the program once it identifies where the jobs are.

We Want Your Opinions on Our Website

Can you easily find what you are looking for on our website? Is it organized in a way that makes sense?

We hope to do some updates to the website in the next several months. Let us know what changes you would like to see or if you want to be one of our website advisors. Contact nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca



Language Champions Graduate

Congratulations to the Dehcho Certificate in Aboriginal Language Revitalization graduates. They were honoured at a graduation ceremony in Fort Providence in June. The program was sponsored by the University of Victoria, Dehcho First Nations and the Dehcho Divisional Education Council.



Where is Umea?

Helen Balanoff, our former executive director, continues to be amazed at the impacts of research the NWT Literacy Council and partners conducted into Ulukhaktok literacies. She shared the latest impacts of the research team's British Museum research with an international audience this spring.

Do you know where Umea is? I didn't. But that was where the International Congress on Arctic Social Sciences was held. The Inuinnaït research team wanted to submit a follow-up paper to the one Ulukhaktok's Emily Kudlak and Helen Kitekudlak and I presented in 2013, in Prince George, BC on the Inuinnaït trip to the British Museum. Our paper was selected, so I learned about Umea...

Umea is a beautiful city of 120,000 in northern Sweden, a six-hour train ride north of Stockholm. It's within the homeland of Sami reindeer herders, and was Europe's cultural capital in 2014. It has a vibrant university, with more than 30,000 students. The University's Arctic Research Centre, the Language Studies Centre, and the Centre for Sami Research hosted the Congress.

In all, the Congress had 22 themes, ranging from language and culture, to climate change, to sustainability.

Our paper, *Repossessing Inuinait Identity that Is “Out of Place”* focussed on activities that came out of our British Museum research. While at the museum, Inuinait elders and language specialists examined for the first time Inuinait objects older than any they had ever seen. A lot has happened since then.

- A crimped shoe-making workshop was held in Ulukhaktok.
- A revival of body tattooing is underway with some designs modelled on tattoos of Inuinait ancestors shown in drawings on some tools at the museum.
- Replicas of Inuinait clothing were made in Cambridge Bay.
- People are making jewellery and ulus in Ulukhaktok, also modelled on drawings on some of the tools.
- Bow and arrow-making workshops with youth were held in Ulukhaktok.

Congress participants had access to our documentary video of the British Museum trip. An interesting outcome of our presentation was that three other presenters, who were collaborating on a new repatriation project, liked our video so much that they incorporated a similar idea into their proposal.

Other papers in the session included the revival of the Rainbow Ceremony among Indigenous people in Australia, the erosion and revival of drumming among the Sami, and repatriation of Ojibwe objects in northern Wisconsin. I attended sessions on education, language, and Indigenous wellness. I was particularly interested in Finland’s approach to early learning, and saw a fascinating presentation on indigenizing Math by a Yupiaq woman from Alaska. I also watched a very moving film, *Sami Blood*, about a Sami woman’s experience in residential school. And, I was proud that the Congress showed *Guardians of Eternity*, by NWT filmmaker, France Benoit, about Yellowknife’s Giant Mine.

I wasn’t the only person from the NWT Literacy Council who attended the Congress. Our vice-president, Suzanne Robinson, presented a paper, *What is Winter?* This was part of Suzanne’s PhD dissertation. She talked about using student photos to encourage student writing. A few days later, Suzanne successfully defended her dissertation in England. Congratulations, Dr. Suzanne Robinson!

You can read more about the Ulukhaktok Literacies Research on our website at www.nwtliteracy.ca and in previous issues of *Literacy Matters*. You can also watch videos about the British Museum research on our [YouTube](#) channel.

Indigenous Languages Month Changed to February

For the first time the NWT will celebrate Indigenous Languages Month in February in 2018 instead of in March.

The coordinators of the Indigenous language communities decided on this change. It was made to accommodate the busy people in communities who organize events and activities. They found Indigenous Languages Month promotion was difficult to do in the midst of fiscal year-end financial and activity reporting.

The theme for Indigenous Languages Month 2018 is: *Our language opens doors.*

Watch for information about how you can get involved. We hope schools and communities will hold language celebrations or talent shows, and ask students to nominate language role models. We want to highlight the job opportunities open for Indigenous language speakers by involving employers in next year’s celebrations.

Contact your regional Indigenous language coordinator or the NWT Literacy Council for information.

Youth Are Building Their Skills

Our community partners organized and facilitated 11 Skill Builders for Youth projects in seven communities this past winter.

The *Skill Builders for Youth* program has evolved a lot over the last four years, and we are proud of how community-driven it has become.

Adult and youth services coordinator, Katie Johnson, and the Literacy Council's executive director, Kathryn Barry Paddock, headed to Inuvik in March to train facilitators to use digital storytelling to embed literacy and essential skills. We've used digital storytelling in different ways over the years. In 2010 we used PowerPoint to make talking books, we created stop motion animation with our partners at WAMP (Western Arctic Moving Pictures), and now within our new program, *Telling Our Stories*.

During the training we practiced using video-making software and other activities that could be used to enhance essential skills development. Participants from Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchic and Inuvik all made great digital stories. We can't wait to see how these people use their skills in their communities. Thank you to the Inuvik Centennial Library for hosting this workshop.

We created a digital literacy toolkit that community organizations can borrow to run their own digital literacy

programs for youth. This was in response to groups who want to run digital storytelling projects but can't afford the necessary equipment. FOXY/SMASH already used the kit at their Peer Leader Retreats this summer. We are happy to support programs by providing laptops, iPads, cameras and microphones for digital storytelling.

Nine participants from five communities came to our annual Youth Literacy training in May. For a fun three days we practiced our skills in the kitchen, shared ideas, developed facilitation skills, used technology, and expanded on our teamwork skills. We also gained many new ideas from these participants to add to our draft *Youth Literacy Nights* resource.

Funding is now available for projects for the 2017-18 year. Anyone who has taken Youth Literacy training since 2013 is eligible to apply to run *Learning in the Kitchen*, *Youth Literacy Nights*, or *Telling Our Stories* projects. Along with funding, the NWT Literacy Council provides support to plan, operate and evaluate youth projects. We also visit some projects each year. Contact nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca with any of your *Skill Builders for Youth* questions.



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We Have a Bus!

We finally bought a bus to transform into our Bison Bus mobile family literacy centre. It will visit NWT communities accessible by our highway system. We will stock the Bison Bus with games, puzzles, and of course books to share with families.

We bought a shuttle bus used at one of the diamond mines to transport workers from its airstrip to the mine site. The first step will be to remove the existing seats, and build shelves and storage. We are designing the interior space to accommodate family literacy supplies and seating spaces for parents and children who visit the bus.

We will paint the outside of the bus and include the logos of all of our sponsors. Thank you to the donors who helped make the Bison Bus a reality.

Ahlstrom Wright Oliver & Cooper
LLP and Staff

Alain and Nicole Normand

Amber and Paul Henry

Amy Ryan

Bette Lyons

Bill and Trudy Joosse

Bronwyn Watters

DeBeers Business Opportunities
Breakfast

GNWT Legal Registry
Division Staff

JSL Mechanical Installations Ltd.
(Edmonton)

JSL Mechanical Installations Ltd.
(Yellowknife)

Rachel Vanderveen
and Jeremy Kielstra

Rachel Gauthier

Ryfan Electric Ltd.

Sidney Johnson

Stuart Olson and Staff

Union of Northern Workers



Get Ready for NWT Literacy Week

This year's NWT Literacy Week theme is physical literacy. Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical skills (competence), and knowledge to be physically active for life.

The development of physical literacy allows us to actively play and pretend with our children, develop social skills by playing different sports, succeed in active workplaces, remain mobile as we age, and much more!

Like other forms of literacy, physical literacy is a life-long journey. It gives people the skills to be physically active in many different environments and situations throughout their lives. Both literacy and physical literacy help us to achieve our goals, develop our potential, participate fully in life, and contribute to our communities. Physical literacy is a concept that includes everyone, of all abilities.

We chose physical literacy as this year's NWT Literacy Week theme because we thought it would be a good way to introduce people to the concept, and to engage people who don't normally see themselves as part of the literacy world. It also gives us the opportunity to forge new partnerships with groups around the NWT who haven't engaged with our traditional literacy programs.

Community groups can apply for funding to run a physical literacy event during NWT Literacy Week, September 24-30. You can apply for up to \$300

to help pay for things like space and equipment rental, healthy snacks, staff or instructor fees, advertising, and prizes. We'll give out one grant to each community on a first come, first served basis. If funds are still available September 14, then second projects in the same community will be considered. Fill out our online form at <https://tinyurl.com/y8jsp9cq>

Be sure to check out the physical literacy events in your community. In Inuvik, the Senior Men's Basketball League is planning public drop-in games. Hay River's Committee for Persons with Disabilities will hold fun bowling and literacy game activities. In Fort Providence, the students at Deh Gah School will have a whole week of special events. Families in Ndilo and Dettah are invited to join in a Wiiliideh scavenger hunt, and students at Joseph Burr Tyrrell Elementary School in Fort Smith will have fun lunchtime physical activities.

Please let us know how you are celebrating NWT Literacy Week. Email nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca or call 1-866-599-6758 to let us know what you plan in your community. If you are advertising on social media we will help share your information.

1000 Books Before Kindergarten Photo Contest



Thanks to all the folks who submitted photos to our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten photo contest this spring.

We had lots of wonderful photos submitted, including this one from Heather Cane. She sent the photo of her children reading on the floor. Her name was selected from a draw of all entries. When she got home with her prize basket, she sent us the photo of her children reading in bed some of the books in the basket.

Families from all over the NWT can participate in the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program. You can find instructions and tracking sheets on our website at www.nwtliteracy.ca

The Gift of Our Language Is Very Powerful



It's always a pleasure for the NWT Literacy Council to host a gathering of the coordinators for each of the official Indigenous language communities. These language champions inspire each other with their pride and determination to revitalize the NWT's nine official Indigenous languages.

This year we included a youth and elder champion for each of the Indigenous languages at the gathering in Yellowknife.

We learned about Beverly Amos's trip to Wales as part of a group studying revitalization of the Welsh language. Bev, who works at the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre, is a member of the Atausiq Inuktitun Titirauseq Task Group that is looking into the standardization of the Inuit writing system.

We also heard about the employment opportunities at CBC North as part of its project to digitize its collection of Indigenous language audio and video materials. CBC hired long-time NWT linguist, Betty Harnum, to lead this project. Betty talked about the need for experienced and trained language workers in the NWT generally, and for this project, during the next 18 months or more.

The participants at the gathering would like to see renewed opportunities for comprehensive interpreter-translator training in the NWT.

The group met with the NWT Commissioner of Official Languages, Shannon Gullberg, to learn more about her role and responsibilities. They also met with the director of the Government of the NWT Aboriginal Languages and Learning Secretariat, Angela James, who spoke about work to update the Indigenous languages planning document. (The new framework for NWT Indigenous Languages was released following the gathering and is online at www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/td_372-182.pdf.) Angela told the group that the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization and Official Languages Boards will be amalgamated.

The gathering learned about Western Arctic Moving Pictures (WAMP) and how this non-government organization can help communities and regions with video projects that promote Indigenous languages. We also heard from Canadian Heritage about its 35 funding programs, some of which are aimed specifically at Indigenous languages projects.

The next gathering is tentatively scheduled for November.

...continued from page 1

When Robert dropped out of high school in 1998 he was only five credits short of graduation. Later, as a journeyman carpenter he wanted to expand his career options. So he took an access program to prepare for the business administration certificate program. He only needed one math course to get into post-secondary education but took the college's prior learning assessment course and other courses necessary for the high school diploma.

"I guess it was a matter of personal achievement and because I could do it in the same timeframe as the access program. If you're going through the access program you should look at all the options."

Robert went on to complete the Business Administration certificate in Yellowknife and is currently an acting manager with the NWT Housing Corporation North Slave office in Yellowknife.

Robert was among the first students to acquire his high school diploma through the Adult Recognition Model in 2014.

Aurora College set up a prior learning assessment course and an Adult Recognition Model so there would be a process for adults to acquire an academic secondary school diploma.

According to Sharon Miron, Chair of Developmental Studies at the Thebacha Campus, there was no process for adults to acquire a high school diploma from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment since most high schools don't accept mature adult students. The "old school" GED (General Education Diploma) is not equivalent to an academic high school diploma and is not used anymore.

"That prompted the Adult Recognition Model as a way to meet student requests and needs," says Sharon.

By developing a portfolio through the prior learning assessment course, students can identify personal experience and learning that can match up to 45 elective credits of their high school diploma requirements.

"These are courses such as art, music, Indigenous languages, physical education, and career and technology studies courses, such as hairdressing, cooking and mechanics," Sharon explains.

An Adult Recognition Model committee reviews the portfolios and then the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment recommends acceptance for diplomas.



Donated Books for NWT Children

Scholastic, an educational publisher, named the Yellowknife Book Celler "A Scholastic Reading Champion" to recognize all this business does to help NWT children discover the joy and power of reading. We were grateful that the Book Celler chose the NWT Literacy Council to receive a donation of books on their behalf. Our family literacy staff members, Emily Smith and Charlotte Upton, can't wait to share these great new books in communities all around the territory! Also pictured are Book Celler staff members, Kaitlyn Denroche and Francine Dennis.

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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!



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