



Newsletter

Winter 2016/17 Edition

Tri-County Literacy Council is a community-based, non-profit organization that enriches both community and individuals by addressing literacy needs

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Site Compliance

Geraldine (Dina) McGowan (B.A., B.Ed.), Executive Director

A new season is upon us and already the agency is more than half way past its fiscal year. (April – March). In spite of the 30-year age of the agency, it continues to climb a steep learning curve. I must admit the uphill battle to grow and improve while maintaining standards of excellence is easier with experience. It is equally important one does not get weighted down by experience and become too rooted in old traditions. That is why I call the upward climb, a battle. It is always a question of making choices between the old and the new. Fortunately, we have staff that is very new to the job and some others, who like me, have dedicated their time and effort over many years to creating a literate community. A staff consisting of younger and somewhat older persons with a variety of talents and skills combined with opportunities to share in “Continuous Improvement Performance and Management Systems” meetings (CIPMS - it’s what we call our staff meetings) ensures Tri-County Literacy Council remains grounded in its practices while keeping up with today’s trends.

Mixing the old with the new is exciting. Meetings that bring staff together create a “meeting of the minds.” Policies and procedures are reviewed, and when necessary, changes to reflect current operations are made. New ideas are presented and

after much discussion they may become new protocols connected with the services offered by the agency. It is this ongoing blend of new and old ideas coupled with Ministry suggestions that make Tri-County Literacy Council an outstanding organization. Recently, the agency was notified of its outstanding performance.

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD), formally known as the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) recently requested a “Site Compliance Questionnaire” be completed. Unlike years ago, when the Ministry visited for several days at a time, the Ministry today chooses the type of Site Compliance visit an agency receives based on its past experience. The Ministry may physically visit the program for a complete program evaluation or choose to visit the agency only to observe possible problem areas. When an agency appears to be in good standing then the Ministry will most likely have the agency submit the questionnaire. This sounds easy, but in the case of Tri-County Literacy Council, challenges are always tackled methodically and strategically. The Ministry chose a paper-based strategic monitoring process for Tri-County Literacy Council.

Site Compliance (Continued)

The final product turned into a 23-page document complete with multiple files containing concrete “proof” for each of the points made to answer the 24 (not counting the many subtopics that were addressed) questions related to the agency. The questionnaire was subdivided. The longest section contained “General Questions” that required explanations around learner feedback, customer service, emergency closures, privacy, database entries, accessibility, security, staff training, and visibility guidelines. The next section, “Service Delivery” delved into assessment strategies, learner plans, and the evaluation of training effectiveness. This was followed by “Data Integrity” which examined the agency’s capacity to use and manage EOIS-CaMS (the provincial Employment Ontario database). The “Financial Management” section examined expenditures in relation to budgets and financial reporting. “Performance Measures” looked at the action plans developed by the agency to monitor and meet contracted commitments with the Ministry. “Reporting” required an explanation of the process in place to ensure mandatory reporting requirements are submitted to the Ministry on time. The last section called “Service Coordination” required a review of the system in place to track and analyze learner referrals to and from the organization. It concluded with the identification of any referral gaps and the strategies in place to strengthen even further Employment Ontario (EO) partnerships with other providers. Providing sufficient detail while assembling the proof to support responses required a “team approach”.

It is apparent from the questionnaire’s section headings that the agency is evaluated as a whole. As such, all staff participated in submitting responses and work samples to be added to the file. It is a big job; however it is one that leads the group to examine its current practices to determine their effectiveness. New practices come to life and it is a reminder that becoming too complacent in any of our jobs is detrimental to the agency in terms of the people it serves and to the funder who provides the means to carry out such worthwhile work. The Ministry examined our work and recently the agency received the Ministry’s feedback regarding the status of the agency. The letter is contained in the appendix of this document.

I share this explanation of a site compliance visit and the accompanying Ministry letter with each of you so you can be assured the work performed at Tri-County Literacy Council is meaningful. It is done with thought and precision and every action undertaken has a reason. Developing literacy instruction and essential skills training requires a skilled staff. To be successful, an agency must develop an expertise and professionalism that demands constant polishing and refreshing. It is an uphill battle, but it is one that we love and when affirmations as in the Ministry letter are received, it spurs each of us on to rise to the challenge and to climb even higher. It is our pleasure to serve the communities of S.D.G. Thank you for allowing us to do so and for your continued support.

It is my hope the coming season brings you much joy, peace and happiness.

Tri-County Literacy Council offers FREE training programs (from Literacy Basic Skills to Occupational courses) in the environment that best suits your learning style and goals. We provide:

- One-on-One Tutoring
- Small Group Classroom

Courses are offered at various times of the year, depending on labour conditions and learner needs.

Visit our website regularly; to learn about the latest FREE courses being offered, or call 613-932-7161.

**Tri-County
Literacy Council**



**WE HELP
ADULTS**

1. Our literacy agency fosters a culture of Customer Service
2. Our literacy agency provides a learner-centered, quality learning environment
3. Our literacy agency provides initial and ongoing support to learners
4. Our literacy agency honours the privacy of its customers
5. Our literacy agency values respect, inclusion and accessibility
6. Our literacy agency knows who its key customers are and actively solicits their feedback
7. Our literacy agency seeks to regularly improve its Customer Service practices
8. Our literacy agency has a formal customer complaint and resolution process and encourages customers' compliments
9. Our literacy agency is actively involved in the community to ensure effective referrals and service coordination
10. Our literacy agency has effective communication practices that reflect its commitment to excellent Customer Service

New Opportunities

Carolyn Eva (B.A. Hons.), Administrative Assistant

As some of you may have noticed, I have a new job title following my name. I'm very excited to share with you that I am changing roles here at Tri-County Literacy Council. My new job title is Administrative Assistant. This means that I will be working more closely with the Executive Director on Grant Proposals and Special Projects. This is a very exciting new opportunity for me as I will continue to develop my repertoire of skills and I look forward to the new challenges that will come with writing grants.

I will continue to attend Service Coordination meetings, Employability Network meetings, and my work as Chair of the Literacy Link of Eastern Ontario. As well, I will continue to schedule the occupational training courses at TCLC to meet the needs of the community. And finally, I will be available to support and guide our instructors, and meet with individual learners and tutors as needed.

As I step into my new role, I look forward to continuing to work with the staff, volunteers and learners of TCLC. As always my door is always open to each and every one of you.

Daycare Worker Training

Carol Anne Maloney (B.A.Sc.), Coordinator of Volunteers

On October 27, 2016 six individuals graduated from the Daycare Worker training program.



Daycare Worker graduates

As part of the program, participants had the opportunity to visit the Richelieu Daycare, Early Years Centre, Cornwall Public Library (children's department), and Job Zone. Various guest speakers were brought into the classroom to provide insight into the field of childcare.

Nutritionist, Stephanie Cyr, supplied information on proper dietary needs for young children. Play Therapist, Jordan Sombritzki, spoke of her role in helping children with various emotional traumas. Stéphanie McDonald explained how to become a licensed daycare with the City of Cornwall. Frances Odair, a local retired teacher, shared the importance of the formative years in a child's development.

In addition, learners completed a project whereas they developed a 5-day Meal Plan and an example of five age-appropriate activities. Students also wrote a one-page essay on a children's topic of their choice.

Congratulations to all graduating students!

From the Coordinator of Volunteers' Desk

Carol Anne Maloney (B.A.Sc.), Coordinator of Volunteers

Our Mandate

Tri-County (Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry) Literacy Council is a community-based, non-profit organization. Our mandate is to enrich both our community and individuals by addressing literacy needs. To do this, we assess learners, help them set goals and provide necessary help in reading, writing, basic math, and computer skills. We recruit volunteers from the community to assist learners in meeting their personal, employment and social goals. This method of instruction can be one-on-one with a tutor, or in a small group. Our services are easily accessible and designed for ongoing growth and expansion. Documenting learning outcomes monitors progress.

Research indicates that volunteering not only improves the life of the individual served and our community as a whole, it also enriches the volunteer's life. Following are only a few reasons to volunteer:

- Volunteering is a great way to discover something you may be good at or develop new skills in areas you enjoy. It can also enable you to experiment with a new career.
- By being a contributing member of our community, you get to meet other people who will enrich your life. Volunteering brings together people from all backgrounds. It offers incredible networking opportunities and the possibility of developing new friendships.
- Volunteering demonstrates who you are, giving concrete examples of your commitment, dedication and interests. Employers are impressed when potential employees have an interest in their community.
- As you help others, you are boosting your own personal growth and self-esteem.
- Volunteering is good for your health. A report titled "The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research" presented by CNCS has established older volunteers have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life, than those who do not volunteer. Older

volunteers are more likely to receive greatest benefits from volunteering. It provides them with physical and social activity and a sense of purpose at a time when their social roles are changing. Volunteers who devote a "considerable" amount of time (about 100 hours per year or 2 hours a week) are most likely to exhibit positive health outcomes.

- Volunteering gives you the satisfaction of making a positive difference in a person's life. Each person counts!!! This reality is a motivator for most of our volunteers.

TCLC volunteer opportunities include:

- **Community Homework and After-School Program (CHAP) tutor**– Approximately twenty elementary school-aged children attend this program. Children receive a healthy snack, help with their homework, and participate in enrichment activities (e.g. Arts and Crafts, sports, meeting guest speakers).
- **One-on-One Program tutor** – A volunteer is matched with an adult student needing help with basic reading, writing, and/or math. Volunteers commit four hours per week and meet at a time and place convenient for both.
- **Classroom Assistant**- Assist an instructor in a classroom setting.
- **Guest Speaker** - Share your expertise with students.
- **Board Member** – Join our board who oversee Tri-County Literacy Council.

My New Role as Literacy Assessor

Anne-Marie Phoenix (Dipl. Bus.Tech./IMS, Cert. Teacher of Adults),
Information Management System Coordinator & Literacy Assessor

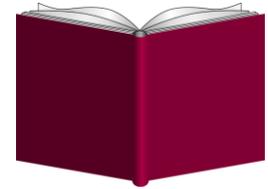
It seems only yesterday that I was writing my first article for the fall newsletter and here we are already into the winter season! Time flies at Tri-County Literacy Council.

On October 24th, I officially stepped into the role of Literacy Assessor. With ongoing guidance from the agency's previous assessor, Carolyn Eva, I am learning the tasks and responsibilities of

the position, and am expanding my knowledge daily with ongoing:

- assessment interviews;
- learner plan writing;
- general public meetings; and
- familiarizing myself with various assessment materials.

I look forward to meeting all new TLC clients.



Sponsor a Book

If you would like us to purchase a book or a resource in memory of someone, or as a special gift like a birthday or retirement, we will place a nameplate in the book. It will read that you donated it and include the name of your chosen person.

The book will be placed in our Lending Library.

As well as, giving a gift to your friend, you will be giving the gift of literacy to a learner.

“Everything Sweet” Christmas Open House

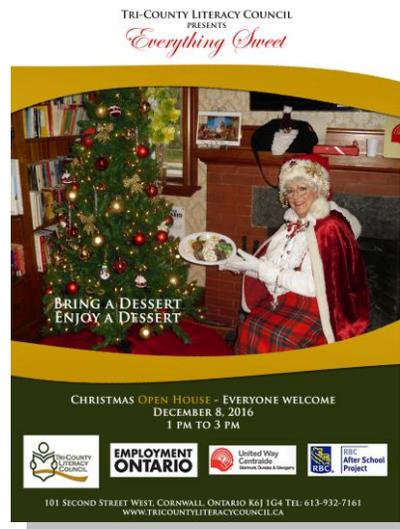
Tri-County Literacy Council staff

On December 8, from 1 to 3 p.m. Tri-County Literacy Council will be kicking off the Christmas season with its annual “Everything Sweet” Open House.

If you've ever wondered what we do here at TLC, this is an opportune time to see the premises, meet staff, ask questions and of course enjoy an abundance of delicious treats.

Spread the word and tell family, friends and neighbours to drop by on this special day.

Everyone is welcome.



MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY
NEW YEAR

Technology Tools for Seniors

**Danielle Bray (Cert. Hons., e-Business Web Developer),
Business Development Coordinator & Literacy Instructor**

**Tri-County
Literacy Council
Board of Directors**

Barbara Petepiece,
Chairperson

Shirley Fraser,
Secretary

Angus Kelly,
Treasurer

Catherine Levac,
Member at Large

Denise Paquette,
HR Consultant

Tri-County Literacy Council is happy to announce it has received funding from the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program, to socially include seniors with technology use by means of a booklet which will show how to perform electronic tasks for everyday life. This guide includes instructions for using:

- Hospital parking pay stations and ticket dispensers
- The Check-In Kiosk at the Walk-In Clinic (McConnell)
- An Automated Teller Machine (ATM)

- Debit or credit card to pay for products or services
- A Picture Kiosk to self-develop photographs
- An In-Restaurant Kiosk to save time at a fast food restaurants

Seniors requiring additional help may request onsite group training.

Call Tri-County Literacy Council at 613-932-7161 to schedule an appointment to pick up your free guide, if you are a senior 55+.

NEW Training: Microsoft Excel

**Danielle Bray (Cert. Hons., e-Business Web Developer),
Business Development Coordinator & Literacy Instructor**

On November 17th, graduates of the NEW Microsoft® Excel program received their well-earned certificates, along with a Health & Safety Awareness Certificate to add to their employment portfolio.



Microsoft Excel graduates

Microsoft Excel is a spreadsheet program that allows you to enter numbers or information into the

rows or columns of a spreadsheet. These entries can be used for making calculations of difficult formulas easy, graphs, and statistical analysis.

Following a basic computer review, participants were introduced to Microsoft Excel features and functions as they practiced using these. Hands-on exercises included developing a budget with balancing formulas, a Job Search Log, charts and familiarizing oneself with Pivot Tables. Additional classroom activities included Resume Writing and a Practice Interview.

Connecting with community partners, Job Zone (site visit) and Contact North (guest speaker) enabled learners to discover other free resources to either improve their job searching skills or further their education.

An Inspiring Opportunity

**Sara Lauzon (Dipl. Arts & Science, B.A. History),
Essential Skills Instructor**

In September, I was invited to Tri-County Literacy Council's "Literacy Day" event. I had the privilege of meeting staff, students, volunteers, and the public. Little did I know, that afternoon of volunteering would lead me towards obtaining more rewarding full-time employment.

I often tell my students to never lose hope, even when things are tough. The perfect example being less than two months ago, I was working at a fast food restaurant on part-time basis.

As I teach the Literacy & Basic Skills (LBS) and General Educational Development (GED) class, I am never at a loss for inspiration. My class ranges from 20 year olds, to students in their 60s and 70s. As such, I have never had a more rewarding job than helping my students reach their goals; especially when it comes to earning their grade 12 equivalency.

I would like you to know that you all inspire me immensely!

Essential Skills are the skills people need for work, learning, and life. They provide the foundation for learning all other skills and are the cornerstone of lifelong learning.

There are 9 Essential Skills:

1. Reading
2. Document Use
3. Numeracy
4. Writing
5. Oral Communication
6. Working with Others
7. Thinking
8. Computer Use
9. Continuous Learning



NEVER LOSE HOPE. LIFE IS
FULL OF SURPRISES!

Computer Use: An Essential Skill

**Sara Lauzon (Dipl. Arts & Science, B.A. History),
Essential Skills Instructor**

Like most employees of Tri-County Literacy Council, my employment includes a second role. As such, I am also providing Basic Computer training, during the afternoon.

Participants learn basic skills that are essential to working on a computer or a laptop. The majority of students did not know how to turn on a computer. I am happy to report that they are already searching the Internet being only three weeks into the course!

Future course topics include site visits to community partners Job Zone and Cornwall Public Library. These visits will

help students in their job search, as well as enable them to access a public computer and the Internet, free of charge.

In upcoming weeks, Carilyne Hebert, Online Learning Recruitment Officer for Contact North will speak to the class about free and paid self-learning opportunities for those wishing to continue their education.

I would like to congratulate my class on their improvement. I can't wait to see how much further your knowledge grows!

CHAP

A.J. Singh, CHAP Coordinator and Sayqa Akhtar, CHAP Facilitator

Tri-County Literacy Council Staff Members

Dina McGowan,
Executive Director

Carolyn Eva,
Administrative
Assistant

Anne-Marie Phoenix,
Information
Management
System Coordinator &
Literacy Assessor

Carol Anne Maloney,
Coordinator of
Volunteers

Danielle Bray,
Business Development
Coordinator

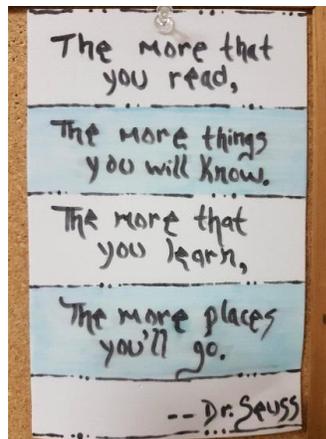
Sara Lauzon,
Essential Skills
Instructor

Ruth Laplante,
Bookkeeper

A.J. Singh,
CHAP Coordinator

Sayqa Akhtar,
CHAP Facilitator

The Community Homework & After-School Program (CHAP) has embarked on a new year of learning, growth and fun, thanks to the funding received from the Royal Bank of Canada. Facilitated at Tri-County Literacy Council, CHAP currently has 17 children enrolled from Kindergarten to Grade Six.



This year CHAP will explore the theme of “Community Citizenship”. This involves working with a variety of SD&G agencies and schools, to teach the children the importance of being actively involved in their community.

The Holiday season is a great time to give back and help those in need. CHAP is again looking to partner with Cornwall Community Cheer Mission, a local non-profit initiative aimed at bringing “cheer” to community seniors with “one act of kindness at a time.” The children will be making holiday cards which will be added to the Christmas baskets put together by Community Cheer volunteers. These carefully-prepared baskets will be delivered to seniors within the community during the Holiday season. This outreach project not only allows children to

become involved in the community, it enables them to directly see how small acts of kindness make a difference.

Since 1 in 7 Canadian children lives in poverty, each student will donate a toy to the Salvation Army “Toy Drive”, so that less fortunate children may receive a Christmas gift. In the spirit of instilling hope for tomorrow, CHAP emphasizes helping those in need.

The Program’s main objective is daily homework completion. It also includes skill-building activities such as:

- healthy eating (Healthy Eating Better Living Program);
- physical education;
- science projects;
- educational games;
- Arts and Crafts; and
- Music.

Literacy is instilled as each child reads books of personal interest.

Guest speakers augment CHAP’s focus on bringing literature to life and community citizenship.



CHAP children

Fall Brings Change to TCLC

**Anne-Marie Phoenix (Dipl. Bus.Tech./IMS, Cert. Teacher of Adults),
Information Management System Coordinator & Literacy Assessor**

Just as the fall season brings changes to outside colours it usually signals a time when changes to documents at Tri-County Literacy Council must be made. There were some updates recently made. Some policies and documents like the “Client Screening Tool” and the “Welcome” and “Exit” Packages were reviewed and it was determined that changes were in order.

The Client Screening Tool is a form used by staff whenever a client expresses an interest in any of the occupational training courses. As well as demographic information (client name, phone number etc.), the form captures the contact source and other data used to assess a client’s suitability for a selected program. This ensures the agency is reaching its target group. An explanation of the target group will follow in the next newsletter. The addition of a new line on the form identifies whether the learner is new to the program or a returning learner. As well, a new section called, “Learner Commitment to the Program” informs the agency of any barriers the learner may have to participating in the program and/or whether there is a need for training supports. These supports will also be addressed in the next newsletter. Identifying barriers at the onset suggests to the learner that he/she must have their life in order if they are to succeed at the attendance requirements of the agency. Both the agency and the learner determine a “readiness”

for the training. Class participation and attendance at Tri-County Literacy Council are stressed at the time of screening and throughout the course as they are a requirement of graduation.

The “Welcome and Exit Package” were designed by Tri-County Literacy Council, and they too, required some minor updates. These documents serve to inform learners of several policies and procedures that may impact their learning. A common element of both documents is “Follow-up”. Follow-up is important to the agency as it provides feedback concerning learners’ next steps beyond Tri-County Literacy Council. In order to identify the effectiveness of training the Ministry requires learners be contacted at 3, 6 and 12 months upon exiting training. The key is to identify their employment and/or education status.

When contacting learners, the Ministry requires the agency use the “Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Exit and Follow-Up” form. Like Tri-County Literacy Council the Ministry has been updating its forms. This is due in part to the Ministry’s name change. Newly added to the form are options concerning learner opinions (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree) connected with the following questions:

- As a result of participating in LBS program, your employment situation has improved.

- As a result of participating in LBS program, you are better prepared to find and maintain employment.
- As a result of participating in LBS program, you have developed and/or increased skills.

Since Follow-up is very important to both the agency and the Ministry, TCLC has worked very hard to ensure contact with learners after their departure. A card with contact information is distributed prior to leaving training and the Information Management System Coordinator visits classes to review the importance of maintaining contact with the agency. The updated Exit Package recommends learners provide an alternative contact in the event they move and/or are working at the time(s) the agency calls.

Much of the data from the Welcome Package, Exit Package and Follow-up is pooled into several charts and graphs. These are frequently analyzed and are used to determine whether administrative and/or programming changes are necessary. Perhaps a description of such a change will be given in another newsletter. For now, it is important the community know the work of Tri-County Literacy Council is supported by learner/volunteer comments and suggestions, as well as agency and Ministry evaluations. That is what makes it an A+ agency.

**EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO**



**Tri-County
Literacy Council**

101 Second Street West
Cornwall, Ontario
K6J 1G4

PHONE:
(613) 932-7161

FAX:
(613) 932-5121

We're on the Web!
www.tricountyliteracycouncil.ca

Visit our website regularly; to learn about the latest FREE courses being offered.

Appendix

**Ministry of Advanced Education
and Skills Development**

Employment and Training Division
132 Second St East, Suite 202
Cornwall ON K6H 1Y4

**Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur
et de la Formation professionnelle**

Division de l'emploi et de la formation
132 Deuxième rue Est, Suite 202
Cornwall (ON) K6H 1Y4



October 24, 2016

Carol A. Potts
Chairperson
Tri-County Literacy Council #4475A
101 Second Street West
Cornwall, ON
K6J 1G4

Re: ETD 16/17 Service Provider Risk Assessment Result and Next Steps

Dear Carol,

The Ministry recently conducted a risk assessment of your organization as per the ministry's standard due diligence business practices. Thank you for any information and assistance that your organization provided during this process. The purpose of this letter is to share the outcome of this risk assessment with you and advise you about the next steps in the process.

Based on our assessment, we have determined that your organization's overall risk rating is **LOW**. As a low-risk service provider, your organization will be reassessed every two years with a mid-cycle check-in one year after completion of the full risk assessment.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (613) 933-4296 or via e-mail at pina.gilmour@ontario.ca.

Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pina Gilmour".

Pina Gilmour
Employment and Training Consultant

C: Denis Lapierre, Service Delivery Manager (A)