

Newsletter

Spring 2017 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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Planting the Seeds of a Strategic Plan

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

March is the time of year when we hope to clear away anything that can stand in the way of beginning anew for spring. Today I look forward to the rain washing away some of the dirty winter snow and of all the niceties that will arrive with spring. So it is when fiscal years are about to turn over. Here at Tri-County Literacy Council (TCLC), March 31st marks the end of the year as a new one arrives on April 1st. It is time to reorganize, rethink, and redo the plans needed to succeed in the following year. This is the time we choose to plant the seeds for the coming year.

The seeds planted in an organization are called a Strategic Plan. The agency shuts its doors for a day and staff meets to analyze the past year. They look at what has worked and what has not and make changes to augment programs and services for the New Year. To analyze the year, staff will look at statistics, news reports, learner evaluations and testimonials. They will compare “hard data” to their own thoughts and opinions regarding organizational successes and/or failures. New program schedules will emerge and ideas for new training courses will be shared. Equally important, staff will provide input concerning the future direction of the organization. This feedback will then be shared with our Board of Directors who volunteers their time to steer the organization to success.

A document representing plans for the coming 2017/18 fiscal year emerges.

This Strategic Plan is used to compare and contrast the activities of the agency throughout the year. The plan maps out goals and identifies organizational benchmarks. During planning time staff delves into the workings of their departments to take “stock” of what they need in order to accomplish their goals. For newer staff it presents an opportunity to network with seasoned staff and learn some of the “tricks of the trade.” When working in an extremely busy environment, it is important to share organizational strategies. It also gives new facilitators the time needed to grow and take ownership of their respective departments. This is especially vital at this time as the agency is proud to announce new staff arrivals and some changes to the roster.

Carolyn Eva is now the Administrative Assistant of the agency. This means she will assist me in overseeing some staff functions while exploring grant writing opportunities. Since Carolyn moved into this position from the Assessment department, the agency hired Johanna Fraser to share with Anne Marie Phoenix the tasks of First Stop Assessment and Information Management Systems. Sara Lauzon now works as the G.E.D. and L.B.S. instructor, while Danielle Bray continues her work producing new curriculum, overseeing the Technology Tools for Seniors project, maintaining the agency’s website and newsletter.



Planting the Seeds of a Strategic Plan (Continued)

Carol Anne Maloney remains as the Coordinator of Volunteers and Ruth Laplante as our in-house Bookkeeper. It is imperative roles change as the agency evolves and takes on new responsibilities. Cross training ensures no disruption in service especially when individuals find they are in a position where they must leave. That is the case with Sayqa Akhtar.

Sayqa worked as the Coordinator of the Community Homework and After-School Program (C.H.A.P.) for the past few years. After a short leave she returned to assist in the program and she currently works with Kelsey Anderson, the newly appointed C.H.A.P. Coordinator.

Sayqa will soon leave to give birth to her first child. Replacing Sayqa in this position is Eric Heward who also worked in the core program as well as C.H.A.P not so long ago.

Regardless of personnel changes, the agency continues to deliver its programs and services both efficiently and effectively. There is little time to train personnel, and therefore, working with individuals who can appreciate the importance of adapting to change while learning very quickly, is imperative.

Only then can an agency like Tri-County Literacy Council remain on task.

Tri-County Literacy Council is on track to achieve its goals. To date, all targets have been met and in most cases they are surpassed. **The first percentage in the brackets represents the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development contractual requirements versus those attained by Tri-County Literacy Council at January 31, 2017.** This is the most recent data available to the agency. The main targets are:

- Customer Service (90% vs. 97%);
- Service Coordination (50% vs. 71%);
- Client Suitability (30% vs. 31%);
- Completions (no target set at this point, however TCLC makes 40% compared to Eastern Ontario at 16% and Ontario at 15%); and
- Number of Learners Served (90% vs. 114% or 166 learners at January 31 of the 175 learners required by TCLC at March 31, 2017).

Each agency is provided with an Overall Service Quality Score. The provincial target of 5.90 is once again surpassed by this agency with a score of 7.12. These successes give agency members the impetus needed to be excited for the planning of a new year.

Once the New Year is mapped out I will share the plans with each of you in order you may take part in this incredible journey with all of us who are privileged to work here at the agency. For me personally, it has been an incredible 31 years and I hope there are several more to follow. Watching the agency expand, while witnessing adult learners emerge with new found independence, while others gain skills needed for employment, apprenticeship, and/or who are moving into secondary or post secondary institutions is beyond what my words can express. It is a gift like none other and it makes it easy to stay the course and plan the 2017/18 fiscal year. They say that Walt Disney had a 50 year Strategic Plan and although I cannot say I have thought that far ahead, I can tell you my head is in the clouds with many more ideas to come...

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.

Service Coordination Overview

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

There is a great amount of work done at Tri-County Literacy Council that occurs ‘behind the scenes’. Although most people recognize the high quality training we offer in Essential Skills, it may come as a surprise to learn about the other services we offer. Through the Literacy and Basic Skills program, learners access five services. Each learner receives the same five services:

1. Information and Referral
2. Assessment
3. Learner Plan Development
4. Training
5. Follow-Up

As part of Service Coordination, the service I’d like to highlight is Information and Referral. This service ensures that information about TCLC’s training opportunities is available to current learners, potential clients, volunteers, other interested individuals, and referring community organizations. TCLC staff must continuously promote the agency’s programs within the community and evaluate the effectiveness of the agency’s outreach strategy and activities, as well as revise these strategies accordingly. Some of the ways we do this is by advertising on our digital sign, website, Facebook, Twitter, media, posters, and email. The purpose of this service is to ensure community agencies and the general public are aware of the new and exciting (free) training opportunities at the agency.

The other side to this service is the Referral process. Agency staff coordinates with other community agencies to integrate services and to provide learners with supported access

to other services that help them achieve their goals. These referrals can include supports such as employment services, mental health/counselling services, housing services and financial services. TCLC is responsible for tracking, reporting, and analysing all information and referral activity. In order to do this effectively, the agency has recently created a formal Referral Protocol to guide the agency’s referrals to other programs and community services. This protocol relates to all potential referrals that TCLC staff might make on behalf of a learner while registered in our programs.

Service Coordination is measured by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development. It is a measure of how the service provider supports access to and from other education, training and community services, and how this is effectively incorporated into a learner’s plan.



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

Service Coordination Overview (Continued)



TRI-COUNTY LITERACY COUNCIL IS PROUD TO BE EXCEEDING ITS SERVICE COORDINATION TARGET OF 50%, BY SCORING 68% ON RECENT REPORTS!

This indicates that other agencies recognize the value of our services and are making referrals into our programs

and that agency staff are coordinating efforts with other community agencies to ensure our learners are accessing all the services that could support them in reaching their goals. This is how Tri-County Literacy Council is participating in Service Coordination to the benefit of our community.

Volunteer Appreciation Celebration

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

Tri-County Literacy Council is fortunate to have so many volunteers helping out in a variety of roles. **Each volunteer makes a significant contribution, allowing the agency to excel in our community.**

Overall, Canadians continue to rise up to the challenge when it comes to volunteering, as 12.7 million (44%) Canadians volunteered in 2013 (*Source: Volunteer in Canada, 2004-2013 report*). Additionally, 82% of Canadians volunteer informally, meaning they help people directly, without the involvement of an organization or group. This is almost double the formal volunteer rate. It may be shovelling a neighbour's driveway, driving a senior to a medical appointment, or providing baked goods to a shut-in.

The single biggest motivator in volunteering is to make a positive contribution to the community. Another 77% of volunteers want to use their skills and experience, while only 23% of individuals choose to volunteer to improve job prospects. Approximately half of Canadian volunteers consider volunteering to be a great way to network and meet people.

The non-profit sector has long anticipated the retirement of the large baby boom cohort would result in an influx of volunteers, but this has not happened. In the past, retirees used to volunteer to fill their time, but now many are choosing to travel, spending fewer, regular hours volunteering. There is a large group of individuals who want to use their skills, work in an episodic way and not make a multi-year commitment. Presently, 37% of Canadian volunteer activities are episodic, meaning occurring one to four times a year. Episodic volunteers give an average of 36 hours per year. People want the opportunity to share their passions and skills, and have a meaningful, rewarding experience. (*Source: The changing face of volunteering in Canada written by Susan Fish and The Canadian volunteer landscape by Volunteer Canada*).

Tri-County Literacy Council is grateful for its many volunteers. To honour our volunteers, we will be holding a **Volunteer Appreciation celebration on May 25, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.** Please join this important event.

Thank
You

Health Care Support Worker Training

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

Recently, I had the honor of facilitating the Health Care Support Worker training. During this 7-week program, students completed workbook exercises, developed an in-depth research assignment on a health issue of their choice, and met interesting guest speakers.

Angele D'Alessio from the Canadian Mental Health Association provided students with an overview of mental health disorders. A client associated with this agency spoke of his experience of living with a bipolar disorder.

Sandra Deschamps of the Eastern Ontario Health Unit presented the various ways falls can be prevented. Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries of people aged 65 plus.

Registered Dietitian, Stephanie Cyr, spoke on the major food groups, and how to read food labels to determine sodium, fat, and sugar content.

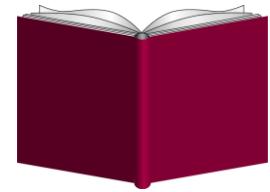
Nancy Galloway of Carefor Health and Community Services made students aware of the prevalence of elder abuse

in our community.

Josée Lefebvre from the Alzheimer's Society shared the challenges that people living with this disease have.

As part of the program, students also had the opportunity of touring the Glen-Stor-Dun Lodge.

Sixteen learners graduated this training on December 15, 2017. I wish all students the best in their future endeavours.



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.



Health Care Support Worker graduates (Essential Skills training)

About Us

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

**Tri-County
Literacy Council Staff**

Dina McGowan,
Executive Director

Carolyn Eva,
Administrative
Assistant

Anne Marie Phoenix,
Information
Management
System Coordinator

Carol Anne Maloney,
Coordinator of
Volunteers

Danielle Bray,
Business Development
Coordinator

Johanna Fraser
Literacy Assessor

Sara Lauzon,
Essential Skills
Instructor

Ruth Laplante,
Bookkeeper

Sayqa Akhtar,
CHAP Coordinator

Kelsey Anderson,
CHAP Facilitator



Tri-County Literacy Council, 101 Second Street West, Cornwall, specializes in addressing adult literacy needs. Programs include:

- Literacy & Basic Skills (L.B.S.) upgrading;
- General Education Development (G.E.D.) Preparation;
- Apprenticeship Preparation;
- Basic Computer training;
- Occupational training for entry-level positions; and a
- Community Homework & After-school Program (C.H.A.P.).

Training is based on the nine Essential Skills identified by the Government of Canada as being necessary for success at work and in daily life. The nine Essential Skills are:

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

We offer a small group classroom and one-on-one tutoring.

All of our programs and services are free of charge (including literacy assessments).

Training supports may be available.

We invite you to follow us online at www.tricountyliteracycouncil.ca to receive instant notification of upcoming free courses and news.

This *Employment Ontario* service is funded by the Ontario government.

Tri-County Literacy Council also thanks the following funders for their much-needed contribution:

- United Way
- City of Cornwall
- Cornwall Sunrise Rotary Club
- MacMillan's Convenience
- RBC After-school Project

We also thank our many volunteers who greatly enhance programs and services by generously giving of their skills, talents, encouragement and time.

For more information, call Tri-County Literacy Council at 613-932-7161.

New training: Customer Service

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



Tri-County Literacy Council is happy to offer a new training opportunity to SD&G adults: Customer Service.

In today's highly competitive global market, no business can afford to lose customers. The quality of Customer Service employees provide affects whether customers return and the business makes money long term.

In this program we will be exploring the basics of providing excellent Customer Service, based on Essential Skills, for the following popular entry-level employment positions:

- Retail Associate;
- Food Counter Attendant & Kitchen Helper; and
- Call Centre Representative.

Whether you are new to your service role, looking for a job as a service provider or need a refresher in the basics of exceptional service, this course will be helpful. Participants also benefit from role playing, meeting industry guest speakers and site visits.

This free 8-week course starts Tuesday, April 18, 2017. Class runs Monday to Thursday. For more information or to apply, call 613-932-7161. Seating is limited.

L.B.S. Upgrading and G.E.D. Preparation

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

It has been an exciting winter for the Literacy and Basic Skills (L.B.S.) and General Education Development (G.E.D.) Preparation learners.

The students have been working extremely hard to prepare for their G.E.D. testing in order to obtain their high school equivalency. All students work at different levels, and at their own pace. However, many students are at a similar math and writing level. Because of this, we have been majorly focussing on algebra, as well as paragraph and essay writing.



I am extremely proud of all of my students and I can't wait to celebrate each of their successes.

Congratulations on working so hard this winter! You are all doing fantastic and I love seeing your constant improvement!

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

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.

Microsoft Excel Training

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

On February 16th, learners of the Microsoft Excel training program received their well-earned certificate.

In this 5-week training program, students learned basic tasks, in order to upgrade their skills for employment. Course topics included:

- Computer Basics Review
- Introduction to MS Excel
- Creating a Budget
- Formulas
- Resume Writing
- Practice Interview
- And more

Participants also benefited from a site visit to community partner Job Zone which enabled them to become familiar with this agency's valuable services. A Contact North guest speaker also spoke to the class about online learning opportunities, should students wish to further their education. It was a pleasure to teach such a motivated and dedicated group!



Microsoft Excel graduates

Basic Computer Training

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

Computer use is listed as one of the government's nine Essential Skills necessary for success at work and in daily life.

Technology is everywhere. More and more, we are being asked to use technology in our daily lives. On a regular basis one might use an Automated Teller Machine (ATM), pay for parking at a lot terminal, or place a food order at an in-restaurant kiosk. More and more, we are being asked to email or perform online transactions via the Internet. Sometimes, one might feel as though one is being left behind when it comes to technology.

For those who are not comfortable with computer use, a (work-related) Basic Computer class will be starting in March. The course will focus on the following basics:

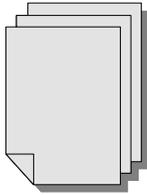
- Parts of the Computer
- Using a Mouse and Keyboarding
- Understanding the Desktop
- Creating Folders and Saving Files
- Browsing the World Wide Web
- Email

For more information or to register, call 613-932-7161. Space is limited.

File Management

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

Being organized is critical when working in an office environment. As the IMS Coordinator, one of my duties is to maintain various documents (forms, spreadsheets, charts, policies, guidelines, reports, etc.) in both printed and electronic formats.



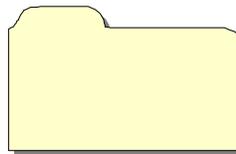
Organization experts say that one should be able to find the majority of his/her documents without having to use the Search function of their Microsoft Windows Operating System. (I have found that using this function is not always the most efficient method for locating files.)

In the spirit of locating files in a more efficient manner, I have begun to re-organize the electronic files that I am

responsible for, by embracing the following system:

- Setting-up a file structure. This can take time. Review your files and their content to decide what category titles to use. Once this is established, *stay with it*.
- Create folders and give them names that make sense. (File names should also match the documents title.) As you continue to place files into the folders, you will likely find that you will need to create sub-folders.
- When you find that a file needs to reside in more than one area, create a shortcut to it – avoid confusing duplication.

I invite you to review your electronic filing system and improve where you can.



Handbags for Heroes

United Way of S.D. & G.

United Way of S.D & G. is hosting its first annual “Handbags for Heroes” event at the Cornwall Civic Complex salons on April 27, 2017 from 6:30p.m.-10p.m. This stylish, exciting new *cocktail party and handbag auction* will raise funds to support your local United Way member agencies. Bid on gorgeous designer handbags from Michael Kors, Coach, Kate Spade and more. Enjoy delicious wine and tasty treats along with a fun fashion show and a chance to win great prizes. Tickets will be on sale March 13 at the United Way office (405 4th Street West). Ticket prices are \$40 each or gather your “besties” for a table of eight for \$300. Join us to learn how the United Way is making a difference in our community, while having an amazing night out! A limited amount of tickets are available.

**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

Dina McGowan,
Executive Director

**Tri-County
Literacy Council**

101 Second St. West
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613-932-5121

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.tricountyliteracycouncil.ca

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

C.H.A.P.

**Kelsey Anderson (B.A.), CHAP Coordinator
Eric Heward (M.A.), CHAP Facilitator**

In the past months, the children of the Community Homework & After-School Program (C.H.A.P.) have been busy with a variety of themes.

A prominent topic explored was 'safety'. Children learned about the importance of safety in a variety of settings.

This included a workshop from at St. John's Ambulance volunteer. The workshop addressed topics that would help children deal with unexpected emergencies and ways in which they can stay safe when they may be alone. They learned about dealing with phone calls and visitors along with recognizing hazards and following home safety procedures. They also learned about First Aid basics, healthy eating, fire safety and the correct methods for using 911. C.H.A.P. is also gearing up for spring. The children made indoor plant holders; growing a vegetable of their choice. The plants were hung by the main window in the classroom where sunlight shines in. The children take turns watering the plants on a daily basis and recording the changes and growth in their plant journals, on a weekly basis. As each

child's plant begins to sprout, they are required to measure, document, and draw what it looks like. This initiative is designed to not only enhance the children's knowledge of growing plants and healthy food but to exercise skills required in caring for and being responsible for something.

This encourages the children to take pride in their work and aids in their feeling of accomplishment.

Although the program's main objective is daily homework completion, it also includes:

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

The Community Homework & After-School Program is funded by the Royal Bank of Canada.



CHAP project: indoor planters

An Exciting New Chapter

**Johanna Fraser (B.A. English, B.Ed. specialization in ESL)
Literacy Assessor**



**Johanna Fraser
Literacy Assessor**

As I embark on an exciting new chapter of my working life here at Tri-County Literacy Council, it is difficult to contain my excitement.

I started as a volunteer in the One-on-One Tutoring Program over a year ago and never thought I would be working here as an assessor. It truly is my dream job. My educational background is in education, specifically teaching English Second Language (E.S.L.). I am so happy to be working in education, specifically literacy.

Oh and what a great team I am working with! I first met Carol Anne and Carolyn during the tutoring workshop I took in late 2015. Shortly after, I started volunteering as a tutor and worked closely with Carol Anne. It has been such a great experience and because of my relationship with TCLC I met Dina, Executive Director, who suggested I would be a good fit for the Assessor position and as a backup for the Information Management System (IMS) role to Anne-Marie. Anne-Marie and I share an office and she has been amazing at showing me the ropes and has

been so supportive. Supportive is the key word. I have had so much support from my colleagues including all of the above as well as Sara, Danielle, Ruth and Sayqa.

Since joining TCLC staff, I have had the opportunity to meet some wonderful individuals who have come to us for assessment and training. It is my job to ensure all who are approaching TCLC, with interest in improving their literacy skills, find the right program. In doing so, we have a protocol to follow which guides me as the Assessor and ensures all learners are on the correct path to attain their goals. It gives me such a thrill to be able to help our learners find their goal path: Employment, Apprenticeship, Independence, Secondary, and Post Secondary. I look forward to seeing the progress they will achieve.

In the future, I will have more specifics about the topic of assessment as my role unfolds. Stay tuned!

**EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO**

Cornwall
ONTARIO CANADA
A city with a world of possibilities



**United Way
Centraide**
Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry



35 Marlborough Street North, Cornwall, Ontario K6H 3Z6

