



# Literacy Council York-Simcoe

*Improving Lives Through Literacy*

# 2010 Annual Report



# Literacy Council York-Simcoe

*Improving Lives Through Literacy*

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# Literacy Council York-Simcoe

## *Improving Lives Through Literacy*

**Executive Message ~ Sharon Russell, Chair & Trisha Patrick, Executive Director**

It is with great pleasure that we reflect on the past year and on all of its accomplishments. We are executing the final year of our strategic plan successfully and are meeting and exceeding key targets. We are excited about our future as we plan for the development of another strategic plan in 2012. The lessons and accomplishments we have learned will aid us when we set our new strategic direction.

We anticipate an exciting year with the implementation direction from Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework and a new case management reporting system.

We made it our goal to raise awareness about adult literacy in York Region and we successfully accomplished that goal, gracing the pages of print media and appearing on television shows from Richmond Hill to East Gwillimbury.

We launched a community-wide Live it Up for Literacy campaign and were able to raise friends and funds for our organization by networking with new individual, corporate and community donors and by building key relationships. From those relationships and others made through initiatives such as our Wine & Cheese event held last June, we have cultivated and strengthened important partnerships with valued stakeholders. As a result, we have some exciting fund-development plans for the coming year and are well equipped with a strong fundraising strategy and tools left for us by our Resource Development Coordinator, Jessica Lambert. While, sadly, this term marks the end of our Trillium funded development coordinator's position, we have met many marketing goals and have developed key tools which we can use to continue to raise the profile of our organization.

In August, we were delighted by the return of Trisha Patrick, Executive Director. Trisha has worked diligently to improve processes and efficiencies in our organization which has helped us to move forward in leaps and bounds.

At LCYS, innovation is encouraged and valued; thus, we are excited to report that this year we broke new ground with our workplace literacy program. This program was established by combining a mobile lab, specialized software, and a trained instructor to take learning on the road and into the homes of organizations and corporations across York-Simcoe. We benefited from the establishment of a great corporate partnership and that company's staff benefited from industry-leading training. Now, we have the potential to provide services to other corporations, groups, and organizations.

As we grow, our need for more space intensifies. Our search for new accommodation continues as we anticipate future expansion; meanwhile, we continue to provide vital literacy and upgrading services to adults in York-Simcoe.

We would like to take an opportunity to thank our students for having the courage and the strength to come to the council to get help, to make changes, to learn new skills, and to improve their lives; their success is our success.

Thank you to the tutors who are committed to their students' success and who push and challenge their students to continue when the going gets tough. Thank you to committee members and other volunteers who help us to achieve our goals behind the scenes.

Thank you to the board members who provide the leadership, the direction, and the expertise which guide this great organization; their countless hours of dedication and their willingness to give of themselves makes a tremendous difference. As the need for our services continues to grow at an alarming rate, we shall need new funding, new volunteers, a new facility, and new program initiatives. We shall need to market LCYS in innovative and creative ways so that students and stakeholders alike are able to find us with ease. Make LCYS and learning a part of the fabric of your lives, and continue to network, to build partnerships, and to engage new ambassadors for our organization.

Finally, we would like to thank the staff whose dedication and hard work can be seen daily; they are the light and the energy of LCYS. They greet, assist, comfort, and challenge the students to push on and to keep trying; they are the oil that makes the council run smoothly.

Thank you all for helping to ensure that we are able to continue to improve lives through literacy.



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## Program Development Committee Report, Derwyn Miller

One of the major accomplishments this year was the development and implementation of a workplace literacy and essential skills pilot project. This project allowed LCYS to partner with a local company and to provide literacy and essential skills upgrading on-site to a number of its employees. This project, funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, was completed at the end of March to the mutual benefit of the company and of LCYS.

LCYS increased the communication among members of the board of directors and staff by initiating a core competency evaluation. Both groups were asked to evaluate the organization in terms of criteria set out by United Way York Region. An analysis of the responses to the evaluation enabled us to share information with both staff and board to help everyone understand better how our organization operates. Board members and staff also attended a get-acquainted session to help improve communication within our organization.



**“When planning for a year, plant corn. When planning for a decade, plant trees. When planning for a life-time, train and educate people.” Chinese Proverb**

Additional training, facilitated by United Way York Region, was arranged for board members to help them to determine how to develop a strategic plan. This plan, to be developed every five years, requires organizations such as LCYS to look at what they have done in the past in order to evaluate what they do well and to determine what they need to do better and where they wish to be in the future. Once we have developed such a plan, clients, staff, tutors, and board members will all be invited to provide input into the plan. Stay tuned for further information. If you are interested in aiding us with the plan development, please contact Trisha at the office.



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## **Learning and Assessment Coordinators' Report**

**Natalie Cholewa, Learning Coordinator & Julia Douglas, Assessment Coordinator**

In 2009-2010, we experienced a significant increase in participation. This increase was due to local employment downsizing and to an increase in Ministry sponsored training initiatives. Although we have seen a return to our usual levels of participation in this year, 2010-2011, we continue to exceed our targets for service.

**We served 215 students who trained for more than 7700 hours**

Our one-to-one program continues to be successful for many of our students. Without the dedication and support of our volunteer tutors, this program would not be possible.

**52 dedicated volunteers provided more than 2300 hours of tutoring**

Congratulations and welcome to the 16 new volunteer tutors trained in 2010-2011. We thank all of the volunteer tutors for giving so much of their time and their patience to help their students improve.

Julia Douglas joined the Literacy Council in June 2010 as the Assessment Coordinator. In addition to doing the intakes and assessments with new students, Julia has researched opportunities for flexible online learning through The Learning Hub. The Learning Hub, offered by the Centres for Employment & Learning of the Avon Maitland District School Board, is funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). Julia has already registered several students for their online classes. This has been a great option for students who would otherwise not be able to continue their upgrading.

This past year, we participated in several professional development opportunities that have allowed us to develop effective strategies for our positions and given us tools to serve the students and volunteers more effectively.

The Literacy Council's continued success is the result of the time, perseverance, and dedication that our students and tutors apply to learning. We wish the students and the tutors all the best in their learning experience at the Literacy Council York-Simcoe.



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## Small Group Facilitator's Report, Nancy Taylor

The past year was a successful one for the Learn, Work, Succeed programme and a productive and rewarding one for the people who attended the small group classes.

Fifty-one people participated in the small groups over the past year and 2045 service hours were provided to people through the groups. Some people attended only literacy classes, some people attended only math classes, and a few people attended both literacy and math classes. There was a wide range of successes enjoyed by our students: some went on to attend college or to write the GED examination, some were successful in finding employment, and some achieved success in attaining their personal goals of improving their skills for their own satisfaction and of having greater personal independence. Happily, all students made progress of some sort.

Students who went on to higher education after leaving LCYS found the small group classes to have been a valuable means of transition from their current situations to their beginning their studies at college: their attending class was a way for them to get used to being in a classroom situation again. Students who found employment found that their having been in a small group while at LCYS helped them to adapt to working with others as part of a team. The improvement of literacy and numeracy skills was beneficial for all students who participated in the groups; improved language and mathematics skills become important personal aptitudes which are valuable assets no matter what life path a person follows.



**“If we teach today the way we were taught yesterday... we rob our students of tomorrow.” John Dewey**



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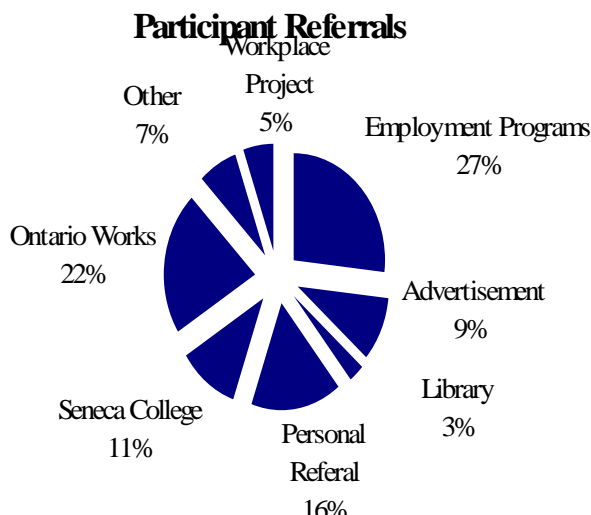
## Computer Lab Report, Tom Smith

### Skills Enhancement for Employment

With the renewal of the CDIF Skills Enhancement for Employment Program Funding, we are fortunate to be able to offer individuals in our community the opportunity to improve their essential skills for employment, including computer and soft skills training; we continue to see a growing stream of students in need of these skills.

During 2010, this project served a total of 195 participants. As of the end of April 2011, 73 new participants have been registered. At this rate, by the end of 2011, we will have provided Skills Enhancement for Employment services to more than 200 individuals from our community.

*This program provides benefits to many individuals. The chart below illustrates how our participants find this program. We continue to partner with community programs and local businesses to ensure that they are aware of this learning opportunity.*



### Literacy Learning

The Aztec software product line continues to be heavily used by our literacy students. The “Ready for Work”, “Essential Skills” and “GED Preparation” components provide a valuable learning environment.

The programs related to spelling, arithmetic and improving typing skills are also very popular.

The computer skills courses (which we offer to the public for a fee) and internet access continue to be available at no charge to literacy students

### LCYS Website

For up-to-date information on what is happening at LCYS, remember to check our website ([www.lcys.ca](http://www.lcys.ca)). If you have any suggestions for additions or changes, please contact Tom in the Computer Lab ([toms@lcys.ca](mailto:toms@lcys.ca)).



# Literacy Council York-Simcoe

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### **The Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills Project, Gail Cunningham**

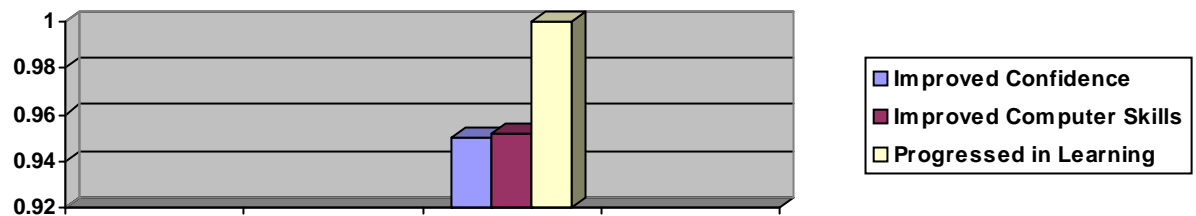
In November of 2010, LCYS initiated a unique program that created a significant impact on the productivity, safety, and personal lives of the employees in a local company.

The project was designed to allow employees access to essential skills upgrading courses during their work schedule. One hundred and thirty-three employees were assessed and were provided training in employment soft skills (positive thinking, team building and specific safety related training); twenty-five of these employees were randomly selected to receive 12 weeks of in-depth essential skills training. This included two, two-hour learning sessions a week, facilitated by an instructor.

This project was offered to the employees though a unique on-site learning experience. Imagine taking LCYS's two most popular and successful computer based learning applications (Aztec Literacy Learning software and the computer training courses) and placing them on a 10 laptop computer mobile lab; this is exactly what we did. LCYS created this advanced teaching tool to help eliminate learning barriers.

Adults tend to work best on their own and at their own speed. The MALL allowed the participants to do exactly that; they would come into a session, turn on the computer, enter the program they needed and were instantly into a learning session.

This technological initiative increased each of the 25 participants' literacy and essential skill levels.



The statistics show that 95% of the participants believe their level of confidence improved; 95.2% believe that their computer skill level improved and 100% believe that they had progressed in learning.

The individual strides made were dependent upon each participant's commitment to learning. Evaluation was instantaneous. There were pre-tests and post-tests with learning and practice embedded into the software programs, thus allowing the participant to correct any errors or misguided way of thinking before the end of each session.

The program was primarily self-directed. Each participant learned something different; there was no comparing of levels, as no-one really knew what any other participant was learning at any given time. Headphones allowed for silence in the room while the learning was taking place. This project presented itself uniquely as being adult friendly. It built upon skills, which in turn increased the self-confidence and self-esteem of participants. The participants' increased competencies became readily visible to them as the level of difficulty of the work they were doing increased. These interactive programs kept the participants motivated to learn through games and quizzes.

The MALL could be used at other community services sites, in employment programs and at local businesses. In a small amount of time, the lab can be packed up in convenient carrying cases and moved on to the next location. The facilitated program and essential skills offered are universal which means that they can be transferred from one type of work site to another without difficulty.

This new, exciting and creative initiative would be accessed through the Literacy Council York-Simcoe. The financial structure of the initiative for business and community services is still in development. LCYS strives to make this MALL a fundamental and affordable program for all of our community business and service partners.



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### Marketing & Fundraising Committee Report, Jessica Lambert

This was a dynamic year for the Marketing and Fundraising Committee. We kicked off our fiscal year with an exciting Wine & Cheese event sponsored by Excelovate; the beautiful venue was donated by Madsen's Gardens and we received contributions from several other valued donors. We also implemented our Live it Up for Literacy campaign which gained media attention in print and on television outlets across York Region.

We developed new marketing materials that are eye-catching and boast our new brand, and we entered the new world of social media. We reached out to local Chambers of Commerce, municipal councils and service clubs, informing people of the importance of adult literacy in our region.

Through various efforts, we established a number of new partnerships and built on existing ones. We had the great pleasure of partnering with the "Rooms with a View" event in Aurora and, as a result, we have a brand new marketing display piece created by our own Tom Smith. We encourage you to drop by our office to see this fabulous photograph. As well, we have established relationships with other potential donors which will be extended into the coming year.

#### **As we gear up for next year, we ask you to continue to help us:**

- Raise friends – host a Live it Up for Literacy event and let your friends and family experience the importance of literacy; invite them to the council for an informal tour or direct them to our website ([www.lcys.ca](http://www.lcys.ca))
- Raise Funds – donate, or encourage others to donate; share your personal and professional contacts, as every donor makes a difference and helps another adult improve his/her life through literacy
- Raise Awareness – join our speakers bureau, become a marketing or fundraising committee member, be an ambassador for LCYS by making yourself aware of what is going on in the council and sharing that information with others

As John Donne wrote, "No man is an island." Our impact in the community is made possible only through the contribution of valued community members. We are all stakeholders in the quest for improved adult literacy and we cannot achieve that goal without you! Please call our office to ask how you can help.

Special thanks to all those who cared enough to learn about what we do, to those who chose to take action to make a difference, and to those who are considering taking action now. You are our team!



**"In good times and in bad times we know people give because you meet needs, and not because you have needs." Kay Grace**



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## Recognition of Donors

Thank You

### Our Funders

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Employment Ontario  
The Regional Municipality of York, Community Development and Investment Fund  
United Way of York Region  
The Ontario Trillium Foundation  
Charitable Bingo—Newmarket Bingo World

**The following individuals and businesses provided donations in support of our program in fiscal year 2010-2011. Gifts received between April 1, 2010 and March 31, 2011 are recognized here.**

#### Literacy Legacy (10,000- 24,999)

Pearson Canada Inc.  
Magna Hoedown 2010

#### Literacy Leader (5,000 - 9,999)

John Howard Society

#### Literacy Investor: (2,500-4,999)

Mrs. Claudette McGowan

#### Literacy Friend: (1,000-2,499)

4 Anonymous  
Mr. Roger Mahabir  
Bank of Montreal  
Scotiabank  
Stikeman Elliot LLP

#### Literacy Supporter (100 –999)

9 Anonymous  
Chapters Newmarket  
TNT Foods  
Mr. & Mrs. Frederick Hilker  
Mrs. Kathy Hunter  
Mrs. Mary Neal  
Mrs. Karen McMillan  
Ms. Trisha Patrick

#### Literacy Helper (20–99)

12 Anonymous  
Park Place Manor  
Mr. Jason Doel  
Mr. Derwyn Miller  
Mrs. Nadia DeFreitas  
Ms. Janice Cohen  
Mrs. Julie Slipacoff  
Mrs. Joan Lockhart Grace  
Mrs. Stephanie Macgregor  
Ms. Anne Martin  
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Ms Mary Casaubon  
Ms. Jacqueline Alonso  
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Mrs. Pat Porth  
Mr. Phil Washburn  
Ms. Amy Hill  
Mr. Peter Brennan

#### In Kind Donations :

Good Life Fitness  
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& Fitness  
Canadian Tire Newmarket  
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Jack Astor's Restaurant  
Persechini Fitness and Squash  
Sobeys Aurora  
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Excelovate  
Strong Man Appliances  
SilverCity Newmarket Cinemas  
& XSCAPE Entertainment  
Centre  
Home Hardware Newmarket  
OOK Jewellery  
Madsen's Garden Centre  
Metro  
The Toronto Star

# Literacy Council York-Simcoe



## Our Mission

To improve reading, writing and math skills in York-Simcoe

Charity NO. 1371164869RP0001

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