



Welcome to Literacy BC's new e-bulletin!

www.literacy.bc.ca 1-800-663-1293

This bulletin is intended to bring you current literacy news in a quick and easy way. It will complement our web site where you can find more in-depth information and resources, and our print-based newsletter, *Imprints*.

We want to hear from you! Let us know what you think of the bulletin by replying to info@literacy.bc.ca.

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In this bulletin we celebrate literacy events in September and the BC winners of two important literacy awards.

In this issue

1. [International Literacy Day, September 8](#)
2. [International Adult Learners' Week, September 7-13](#)
3. [Raise-a-Reader Day, September 25](#)
4. [BC winners of the 2003 Canada Post Literacy Awards](#)
5. [BC learners honoured with Co-operators award at 2003 PGIs](#)

1. International Literacy Day, September 8

Last week the world celebrated the 35th International Literacy Day (ILD). ILD was established in 1965 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). From UNESCO's Paris headquarters to small communities on every continent, ILD was marked with open houses, community reading festivals, literacy displays, fund raisers, and other local events.

At Literacy BC we celebrated ILD with a dinner in Vancouver to launch a new Community Access Fund in memory of Paul Gallagher, former President of Literacy BC. This initiative is part of the PACE Bursary fund for part-time adult learners, administered by Literacy BC. The new fund will assist students with costs such as childcare and transportation. Senator Joyce Fairbairn, Special Advisor to the Minister of Human Resources Development Canada, attended the dinner and brought ILD greetings from Ottawa.

[Top](#)

2. International Adult Learners Week, September 7 - 13

Last week we also celebrated International Adult Learners' Week (IALW) from September 7 to 13, 2003. Canada joins an international movement of over 30 countries in signifying the importance of lifelong learning through this special week declared by UNESCO.

[Top](#)

3. Raise-a-Reader Day, September 25

Make sure you buy a Vancouver Sun on September 25! On that day volunteers and celebrities will be out early in the morning in nine cities across Canada to sell newspapers and raise money for CanWest Global's Raise-a-Reader campaign. Raise-a-Reader was developed by the Vancouver Sun in 1997 and since that time has contributed more than \$620,000 to help BC children read.

One hundred per cent of all the money raised goes directly to organizations that support children's and family literacy. Last year Literacy BC distributed \$50,000 of Raise-a-Reader funds to 50 family literacy programs in BC.

[Top](#)

4. BC winners of the 2003 Canada Post Literacy Awards

Canada Post has announced the winners of its 2003 Literacy Awards. These awards, in four categories, recognize grass roots literacy initiatives and celebrate the achievements of learners, educators, community organizations, volunteers and business leaders. We congratulate all the winners and finalists and are delighted to announce that the 2003 awards go to the following people and organizations in BC:

Individual Achievement Awards celebrate the achievements of learners who successfully overcome social or economic barriers by improving their literacy skills. This year's BC winner is Sharon Buchanan of Vanderhoof. Raised on a farm, Sharon did chores instead of going to school. After running away at age 17, she could not cash a paycheque because she did not know how to sign her name. Having her own child gave Sharon a reason to start learning basic literacy skills. Her goal now is to get her grade twelve and study to become a paramedic.

Educator Awards honour English and French-speaking educators, tutors, and advocates who have demonstrated a commitment to the cause of literacy. One of five educator awards this year goes, posthumously, to Ruth Farrell. Ruth was dedicated to workplace learning. Using an unconventional teaching path with no set curricula, Ruth helped hundreds of people to complete a high school diploma or learn to use a computer. She creatively developed specialized courses directly related to the workplace and workers and took them to factories, hotels and hospitals.

Community Leadership Awards recognize and honour non-profit, volunteer and labour organizations that have demonstrated long-term achievement, innovation, leadership and organizational excellence in furthering the cause of literacy. The Laichwiltach Family Life Society (LFLS) of Campbell River receives one of nine awards granted this year. Using a holistic approach, the LFLS offers adult and family literacy programs, as well as a life skills program featuring cultural components and coping strategies, to assist First Nations people in their healing journeys. The LFLS facilitates learner participation by providing transportation, childminding and lunches.

The **Business Leadership Award** recognizes one business organization annually that has demonstrated its commitment to literacy by establishing or supporting literacy programs in the workplace or community. This year's winner is Teck Cominco Metals Ltd. in Trail. Recognizing that a learning culture would help revitalize and engage the company's largest asset, its workers, Teck Cominco Metals set up a learning centre five years ago. So far, 933 learners have completed 3,437 free workshops and courses that were chosen entirely by employees and scheduled around 15 different shifts.

[View biographies of this year's finalists.](#)

[Top](#)

5. BC learners honoured with Co-operators award at 2003 PGIs

The Co-operators Provincial Learner Achievement Award is presented annually at PGI Golf Tournaments for Literacy across the country. In BC PGI tournaments take place in Victoria and Vancouver.

The Co-operators award honours adult learners who have shown exceptional progress in an Adult Basic Education program. Congratulations to this year's BC winners: Angie Piraino of Victoria and Omer Cormier of Nanaimo.

Angie received her award at Project Literacy Victoria's PGI in June. During her acceptance speech, Angie told how she never had the confidence to complete anything related to school. She could not read aloud without feeling embarrassed. In six months at Project Literacy Victoria she completed Grade 10 and is now working on Grade 11. She has the self-esteem and motivation to achieve her goals of

completing high school and attending a post-secondary institution. Angie believes that having a tutor has been a privilege and he has been a positive influence in her life. He makes her want to learn for herself and he taught her to trust in herself.

Omer Cormier received his award at [Literacy BC's](#) PGI in July. Omer has studied with Literacy Nanaimo and Malaspina University-College for the past 2 ½ years. He was selected by the Literacy BC Learners' Committee to recognize his hard work, enthusiasm, and storytelling, and to honour his remarkable growth and accomplishments.

"Omer has started writing a book about his life. His stories are witty, wise and filled with colourful details." Jamie Moore, Tutor, Literacy Nanaimo

"Omer has worked so hard in two years and has come so far. I believe he is a great role model for other learners in the community, young and old alike." Kate Nesbitt, Literacy BC Learners' Committee

Omer's story in his own words

"At age 14 I kept repeating grade 4. My Dad was very abusive and left my Mom. I had to quit school to help Mom with all 8 children left at home. I never went back to school until 2.5 years ago. I was 58 years old.

All my life I felt something was missing, Education. It was getting harder and harder every year to keep up. A few years ago I quit my job because they put me on a laser computer and I could not do it. I went to the Ministry for help and they did not offer me any support. The ministry people degraded me because I could not read or write or fill a form. I was treated like a second class citizen. That is when I came to Literacy Nanaimo.

My goal is to write a book about my life. I want to help others like myself. I know that without education today you can't go far."

Stay tuned for the next Literacy BC electronic bulletin!

[Top](#)



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