

BEAUTY GALORE

YEARBOOK 2008

A year of learning with...

HCLN 
Halifax Community Learning Network
"a bridge to a brighter future"

This book is dedicated to the spirit of Dezmond Howl II, a beloved canine companion and supporter of literacy through many visits to programs, mid-night walks and countless hours by my side at the Roy Building.

Long may you run, Dez!



*above the hills
the sky grows darker
my friend is gone*

The Halifax Community Learning Network (HCLN) is one of thirty-one community-based adult learning programs funded through the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development's Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning. HCLN offers free programs for adults at the Captain William Spry Public Library, Halifax North Public Library, Keshen Goodman Public Library, Spring Garden Road Public Library and at our newest location, the Lady Hammond Learning Program.

If you know someone who needs help improving their literacy skills or are interested in volunteering, please contact us at:

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www.hcln.ca

For information about other learning opportunities in Nova Scotia, check out the new Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning web site at:

www.goNSSAL.ca or call 1-877-466-7725

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Introduction

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the 2008 yearbook, *Beauty Galore*: a year of learning with the Halifax Community Learning Network. The title comes from a poem by Spring Garden Road Library Adult Learning Program student Jane Burchell.



*Enjoying the beauty of the Himalayas near
Dharamsala, India*

Like many of those who share their writing in this book, Jane is a natural storyteller who draws upon her own experiences in her creative writing.

I like to think that the best of what we do at HCLN is to help those who come here to learn to find their voice and have the opportunity to express themselves, often for the first time. The stories are there but it takes the patience and dedication of volunteer tutors and the hard work of those who attend programs to release them to the world.

In this collection, you will find stories of hope and dreams, loss and learning.

There is indeed, beauty galore.
Enjoy!

Denise Morley
Network Coordinator

Many thanks to...

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations who provided support this year and helped to make HCLN programs and this book possible:

- All of those who find their way to HCLN programs to learn and put your faith in us to help you. We exist because of your commitment to improving your skills and we will continue to do our best to help you reach your goals.
- HCLN Program Coordinators who face the many challenges of their jobs with humour, grace and seemingly endless energy: Jennifer Peach, Laura Channon, Linda Oakley and Shirin MalekAhmedi, your dedication to your students is inspirational.
- Literacy Educator Avril Lewis, who has worked in various positions in community literacy, most recently by providing tutor training to new volunteers and delivering workshops as part of the Reading Together Spryfield Family Literacy Project through HCLN. There is little that happens at HCLN that Avril does not become involved with and her experience and flexibility are very much appreciated.
- Veronica McNeil, Coordinator of the Reading Together Project, who juggled the demands of two family literacy endeavours that had her on the road from the Eastern Shore to Spryfield, and who helped to build excellent community connections between HCLN and other service providers.
- HCLN volunteers: tutors, board members and all of those who share their expertise and enthusiasm for literacy. A thousand thank yous!
- Jenni Blackmore for sharing her stories, ideas and passion for writing with all of us at HCLN.
- Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning, Department of Labour & Workforce Development and in particular, Adult Education Coordinator Lynne Wells-Orchard for her commitment to lifelong learning.

- Literacy Nova Scotia for their support literacy groups and learners through PGI grants, Literacy Action Week events, professional development workshops and much more. Thanks Jayne, Heather and Marie for all your help!
- Anne Marie Downie, Executive Director of Literacy Nova Scotia, a passionate advocate for the cause of literacy and a friend to HCLN.
- Advancing Learning Technologies Project (<http://alt.ns.literacy.ca/>) and in particular Jane MacDonald who traveled throughout Nova Scotia teaching computer skills to those who work or study in adult learning programs.
- The National Adult Literacy Database (www.nald.ca) for their all their work to support community literacy groups and adult learners, and in particular Tracy Hine, Lorette Chiasson and Earl Letts.
- Halifax Public Libraries, our most excellent community partner that provides us with program space, staff support and much more. A special thank you to the following friends of HCLN: Tracey Jones, Sandy Crocker, Troy Myers, Dorothy Minaker, Marlene Fitch, Ella Leving, Scott Taylor, Helen Thexton, Ron Bulmer, Gail Tattrie, Kristina Parlee, Sarah Gillis, and Mohammed Amin
- Options Work Activity and the Halifax Regional Development Association for their support of the Lady Hammond Learning Program
- Adult Learning Knowledge Centre, for their support of the Tutor Learning Circles Project which produced an excellent resource for volunteer tutors.
- Bedford-Sackville Literacy Network, Dartmouth Learning Network, Western HRM Community Learning Network, Preston Area Skills Society, Cunard Centre and Eastern Shore - Musquodobit Valley Literacy Network.
- Rotary Club of Halifax for their help with various projects such as the book sale and their very generous donation to the printing of the Ready Set Know binders.

- A special thank you to the HCLN computer support team: Wil Gamble and Matt Likely are design gurus who have dealt with numerous last minute requests, logo changes, computer crashes, and my dodgy Quark Xpress and InDesign skills with unflagging patience. Their volunteer efforts, and the support of the Minuteman Press team have been essential to the production of everything from the HCLN newsletters to the revision of the Ready Set Know tutor binders.
- More recently, Spring Garden Library tutor Babak Farsi has volunteered his time to respond to IT emergencies such as the Great Laptop Crash of 08 and the May Lost Email Crisis. Many thanks!

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Message from Board Chair

Joshua Judah

First of all, I want to congratulate all of the learners who have participated in our programs and contributed to this yearbook. It takes a great deal of courage and determination to devote yourself to any kind of education program, and returning to school after a long absence is especially brave. I am happy to say that the Halifax Community Learning Network has a fine collection of dedicated staff and volunteers, but the most important driving force is the willpower of individual students.

Second, I offer a heartfelt thanks to our volunteers. With increasing demands on our time, I find it is particularly gratifying that HCLN enjoys the skill and commitment of so many outstanding people. I hope you view this yearbook as evidence of your achievement.

Third, we would all be lost without our amazing staff. Linda Oakley, Jennifer Peach, Laura Channon, Avril Lewis and Shirin MalekAhmadi have done an outstanding job, especially considering how few hours per week we are able to employ them. There is no doubt that our success is the result of them contributing many volunteer hours. Network Coordinator Denise Morley has, once again, been our “everything” women. Denise’s incredible dedication to both HCLN and the cause of education continues to astonish and inspire me.

HCLN: Success Starts Here!

Everyone who studies in community literacy programs work hard and make progress, but occasionally one of our students “blossoms” into a writer, public speaker and advocate for literacy. Barb Pottier of the Captain William Spry Program is such a student.

I remember Barb’s first call to HCLN, when she was unsure if she was ready to return to learning and nervous that her employers would discover her “dark secret”- she could not read and write very well. Two years later, with the support of her tutors but especially her own determination, it is hard to keep track of Barb’s many successes. Last June, she received the 2007 PGI Learner Achievement Award and has not looked back.

Her new self-confidence has led to a promotion at work, speaking at the Literacy Nova Scotia and Halifax Community Learning Network Annual General Meetings, delivering a speech at Province House at the pan-Canadian literacy flag-raising in April and being featured in a film about literacy issues that is being produced by Pink Dog Productions. In addition to all of these activities, Barb also juggles a busy family life as a wife, mother and proud grandmother. In fact, she attended Jenni Blackmore’s creative writing workshop with her newly arrived grandchild in tow! Now that’s lifelong learning in action. Congratulations to Barb and thanks for all your efforts to get the word out about literacy issues.



PGI Learner Achievement Award Recipient Barb Pottier celebrates her success with Bill Mitchell of Cooperators.



Barb shares her story with Minister of Education Karen Casey and others at Province House

Message from Laura Channon Lady Hammond Learning Program Coordinator

The Lady Hammond Learning Program has thrived in its first full year at the new location. The new spot has attracted a new mix of serious students in both Level 1 and 2. This year was marked by a sense of community and people seemed to share more than their pens and pencils. Problems were solved, advice was given (and sometimes even taken) and people found out things about the person who usually sits at the end of the table from them that they didn't find out last year. But in the midst of it all, the emphasis was on the work and the progress people could make.



Ready to study at the Lady Hammond Learning Program

I wish to express my appreciation to the tutors who balanced their own priorities to give us their time and effort, especially in the times when the student mix was changing. All of us in the program are pleased that the program will continue to run over the summer and provide the continued opportunity to learn skills.

The biggest challenge this year was finding enough volunteers but alternate methods of advertising have been useful in attracting some very valuable help. The success I am most proud of is the sense of productivity and confidence that I sense in the room when people feel comfortable learning. People have become more confident and more realistic about their goals, two crucial steps toward seeing something happen. I hope to see as many as possible continue their learning over the summer so that their skills continue to improve.

Message from Linda Oakley Captain William Spry & Keshen Goodman Coordinator

I have worked in Adult Literacy for the past eight years. There are challenges and rewards in my job, but the rewards far out weigh the challenges. One of the greatest rewards is watching learners write their own stories. They are so proud to see their words in print! Learners love to share the yearbook with their family and friends. Their confidence grows, as does their academic skills. To be a small part of this incredible journey makes me feel very humble and honored. Enjoy the stories.



Linda Oakley with tutor Gordon Barnes at the Captain William Spry Library Volunteer Week Party. Gordon has been a literacy volunteer for 11 years!

Message from Shirin MalekAhmadi Keshen Goodman Library Coordinator

I joined Literacy Program at Keshen Goodman Public Library as the Program Coordinator early February 2008 to fill in the position for the remaining months of the season. I have also been the Coordinator for the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program at Alderney Gate Public Library for the last three years. Even though I never worked for the Literacy Program I knew that my experience in the ESL program will help me in running the program to the best of my abilities.

The key to success in this program is to get to know the tutors and learners as quick as possible. The first day I joined the program, I knew that I have to gain the learners and tutors trust and let them know that I am not going to leave the program soon, as it had happened early this year.

I knew that in order to match the pairs who can work together and enjoy the

time they spend in the program, it is important to know the learners and tutors not only by their names and faces but their interests, availabilities, and limitations and of course the reasons for being in the program. It took me a while to do so, having only one day per week, but now that I know each one of them I feel honored to know and work with such wonderful individuals.



Our newest Coordinator, Shirin at the helm at the Keshen Goodman Library

In the last five months I have been with the program I've learned a lot and I feel my life is richer than before just by being touched by those dedicated tutors and hardworking learners. Thanks for the opportunity.

And also many thanks to Linda for helping me out and it was a pleasure to work with you.

I am going to miss you all.

Message from Avril Lewis, Adult Educator Learner Stories: The Tip of The Iceberg

Another year has passed and another year of telling stories has come together in this HCLN Yearbook. Each year as I read the stories written in this book, I find a wide variety of subject matter, reflecting the unique interests of every one of the learners who has work published here. However, I also know that reading each piece is like looking at the beautiful tip of an iceberg. Like the larger part of the iceberg that lies underneath the water, each tutor and learner pair know another hidden story – that is the story behind each piece of writing.

If we could look under the water, what might we see? Our learners needed courage to come through the door, to take the risk to admit to a Coordinator and then a tutor their difficulties with learning. They may have had to face bad memories of school that they have tried to bury. Tutor and learner

had to work hard together not only on building skills, but also building confidence. Some needed to learn that they had a story to tell that was uniquely their own and was important to tell. Then there are any number of challenges that are common in adult life that may have made learning an uphill struggle this year. There may have been many temptations to quit as life got more and more complicated.



Avril Lewis sharing her expertise at the Keshen Goodman Library Tutor Learning Circle

So, I think that each learner and tutor should be extremely proud of seeing work published in this collection. They alone know the effort and dedication that this achievement represents. Congratulations and keep on writing.

A Message from the Regional Literacy Coordinator, Halifax Public Libraries

Sandy Crocker

This year was my first year as literacy coordinator and it was a real learning curve. I had coordinated ESL before but it was my first time in the literacy program at the library. I came halfway through the year and so everyone was in place, all the workshops had been planned and all the dirty work was done for me. I have to thank the literacy coordinators and Denise Morley for making my transition so easy.



Sandy Crocker at the Personality Dimensions & Learning Styles Workshop at Keshen Goodman Public Library.

I am still learning about all the hard work done by the learners and volunteer tutors in the literacy program. I see all the extra workshops the tutors attend and I see all the enthusiasm of both the tutors and learners every week. I was lucky enough to sit in on the tutor orientations held by Denise, to

facilitate Jenni Blackmore's writing session and to attend Michael and Evelyn Kennedy's Personality Dimensions & Learning Styles workshop.

I am inspired by the dedication of the HCLN board members, the learners, the tutors and all the people in the library who make literacy possible. It is what will make me work even harder next year to reach our common aim; a more literate community to make people's lives easier.

Maps for Magical Mystery Tours

By Jenni Blackmore

I was delighted to be invited to lead the creative writing workshops organized by the Halifax Community Learning Network again this year. I met some old friends and made many new ones and I heard so many amazing stories. Stories, stories, stories! For me that's what writing's all about! Everyone is brimming with stories, mysterious ribbons of fact and fantasy that are unique to each and every one of us and also poems that express mysterious depths of emotion or point out the beauty of a single moment that might otherwise have been overlooked. For me, the pencil is the wand, writing is the spell that releases all this magic.



Jenni Blackmore and Linda Oakley at the captain William Spry Library creative writing workshop

My amazement is doubled by the fact that these magical mystery tours are mapped out by scratch marks on paper, lines and curves that somehow become letters which join together to become words that in turn link into sentences . . . and before I know it I'm transported to a foreign country or back in time to a childhood lived decades earlier or to the very deepest core of someone's not-so-very-good day.

How did anyone ever figure out how to make these little scratch marks? I often wonder about this. And how did I ever figure out how to understand

them? Miracles! Seriously, to me the whole reading/writing process is truly miraculous. Perhaps this perception is heightened by the fact that I had a very difficult time learning how to do it. I still clearly remember looking at lines of text and feeling certain that they would never mean a thing to me. Fortunately I have always been curious (and more than a little stubborn). I wanted to know what the pictures in books were about. Wanting to know the whole story was what kept me trying to read even though I was pretty sure I'd never 'get it'.

And the writing? Well, if writing was only about spelling, punctuation, grammar (and all that good stuff :-)(I probably wouldn't have written a word after I left school. Thank goodness writing is much more exciting than that. Writing is about ideas and dreams, it's about feelings, about our pasts and about our futures. Writing comes from the beautiful places deep inside that make us who we are.

We've all got things to say, ideas to share, stories to tell. I'm really glad that I got to work with some people who are determined to find their voice and who were willing to share their words with me. Thank you! And thanks also to Denise for organizing the events and inviting me to be part of them.

Me and the Literacy Program

By Kerry Fitzpatrick,

Keshen Goodman Library Adult Learning Program

This is the story about me attending the literacy program.

I have been coming to the Keshen Goodman Library for two years now and I really enjoy it. I have had two tutors so far and a beautiful friend who tutors me as well. My first tutor was Jennifer. She was great and she taught me a lot of information and I appreciate her for all that she has done.

I have a new tutor now; her name is June. She is a really terrific teacher and has taught me so much already. I don't spend lots of time with her, but the time I do, which is on Wednesday evenings, I am grateful for. She is splendid at her job, and I hope she is my tutor for a long time to come.

Since I have been attending the program, I have come a long way with my skills and learning to read and write better. I thank the staff of the program for all their hard work and time and especially the volunteers, who are really helpful.

Hopefully I will be able to get a great job and be able to read to my son Cody and help him in different activities. These are my goals and my ambitions and I am sticking to them.

No one should be embarrassed to receive help in learning to read and write. People are there to help because they care!



Kerry and her son Cody celebrate at the holiday party at Keshen Goodman Library

Mayflowers

By Etta Hamm

Halifax North Library Tutor

The mayflower is well-known to Nova Scotians as the small, pink, fragrant wildflower growing low to the ground in the cool May shadows of Eastern seacoast woodlands, ditches, and blueberry patches—and as our provincial flower. But few people know of the charming village of Mayflower in Digby County. You can imagine that many mayflowers must grow there.

But can you imagine the deep-down good feeling of coming from a place actually called Mayflower?” Of feeling a secret little thrill every time you hear the word “mayflower” spoken? Can you imagine the memories of a childhood lived in a place so peppered in mayflowers someone was compelled 200 years ago, to name it “Mayflower? Few are so fortunate, for few hail from there—but I am one of the few.

So many mayflowers grew there when I was a child, we could smell them

walking and cycling the winding road to and from school, wooded on both sides for a good stretch. Even driving through, all you had to do was roll a window down and you would smell them. The fragrance hung in the air.

My sisters and brothers and I loved the mayflowers of Mayflower more than anyone else around, and I'll tell you why. Our best mayflower picking spot was just beyond the field at the back of our house in a shady glade near the edge of the blueberry patch. Every year, we would raid the spot, and bring to my mother fat bouquets of mayflowers for her birthday on May 3rd. Not just one bouquet, but one from each of us. One from Marie, one from Guy, one from me, one from Zelée, one from Ann. We brought the four younger ones into the ritual as they grew.

We'd all come barging in the house at the same time, mayflowers extended toward Mother. Every time, she would react the same way. She would put her hands up to her cheeks, open her eyes wide as though surprised, and say, "Oh! Mayflowers! They are so beautiful! Oh, let me smell them!"

One by one, we'd thrust our bunch up to her nose. Taking each bouquet from us, eyes closed in ecstasy, she would take long, deep inhaling breaths over each gift.

Rummaging the pantry for drinking glasses and mason jars, one for each bouquet, she would exclaim, "These are the best gifts you could ever have given me! The best gifts in the whole world I could ever receive for my birthday! You are such good children!" Well, didn't that make us button-busting proud of ourselves.

She would line the mayflowers in a row on the upper ledge of a kitchen window facing East to allow the morning sun to lay brightly on the pink petals, and to shine through the bottoms of the water-filled containers like sparkling crystal. They were a beautiful sight. Mom, and Dad too for that matter, admired and clucked over them the whole week. Now, Mother's Day, as our incredible luck would have it, was just one short week later. The mayflowers then, of course, were even pinker, and more plentiful and fragrant than the week before.

So off we'd go again to the little glade to pull more mayflowers out of the

ground for Mom. How happy we were, finding those cold little flowers hiding under the flat green leaves in the undergrowth. We were, after all, very good children... and we were, after all, doing the best and most important thing we could possibly do for Mom before another whole year rolled around.

Again, we'd come bounding through the kitchen door and try to be the first to have Mom reach for our bouquets for the long, inhaling whiffs we knew were coming.

Again, she would feign complete surprise and exclaim, "Oh, Mayflowers! Oh my, oh my, oh my, I can't believe this! They are so beautiful! How good they smell!"

Over and over, she would inhale their fragrance, deeply—and so would we, hanging around as she poked through the pantry for more containers for our newest gifts. Hanging around, of course, ensured we'd again hear those words, "These are the best gifts—the best, best gifts, you could ever have brought me for Mother's Day! I don't know what I've done to deserve such good children!"

This second round of bouquets would be added to the first lot. As the family grew, the number of bouquets increased. They'd land wherever they would fit and look "pretty... so pretty!" according to Mom.

If Mom was given the opportunity to state her choice of flowers when she got to heaven, I have no doubt she said "I'll have mayflowers, please".

My Periwinkle Baskets

by Ann Darville

Spring Garden Library Adult Learning Program

My Periwinkle baskets are in demand. I call them Periwinkle because they are tiny. They are for decoration only.

It is tiring work. The strips of wood have to be cut very thin with the scissors. It takes a lot more time to make the tiny baskets, and I have more requests for the Periwinkles than I have time.

The smallest basket I have made so far has a base no bigger than a dime. It's plain and round, and has a small handle.

The wood I am using I bring back from Cape Breton. I use both birch and maple. I often use both types of wood in one basket, the darker on the bottom and the lighter on the sides. After I add the handle, I finish off by winding sweetgrass around the rim.



These small baskets are bigger and more decorative than my Periwinkles.

The final touch is my 'signature' on the bottom of the basket: 'AMD 08'.

Literacy

By Rose

Captain William Spry Library Adult Learning Program

Literacy to me is learning I matter and I do have a voice and even though I do not have grade 12, there is a place for me to grow and exercise my mind.

My Heartache

By Denise Moore

Keshen Goodman Library Adult Learning Program

I miss my brother so much. When he was sixteen, he left home, moved to Florida and became a model. He returned home when he was nineteen and started dating a girl and they moved in together and became engaged but shortly after this he ended the relationship. She was devastated. He left again and returned to Florida.

Several years later he wrote two letters, one to his ex-girlfriend and one to our Mother. When he addressed the letters he mixed up the envelopes. In the envelope that my mother received was the letter that he had written to

Heather. In it, he poured his heart out and tried to explain why he had ended their relationship. He told her he was gay.

A couple of years after he returned to Florida, my brother started having health problems. He returned home and after some tests they discovered that he had Hodgkin's Lymphoma. His time in the hospital was very rough. Our brothers never accepted his sexuality and even said that he had AIDS and not cancer. This made me very angry. He was in the hospital for a long and difficult time.

When he got out of the hospital he moved home to stay with my parents and me. At this time I was going through a difficult time in my personal life. My brother and I spent a lot of time together socializing with friends and just being together. I thought he was dealing well with his life but I was mistaken.

One night when he was in his room my Mother walked by and caught him swallowing a bottle of pills. He was trying to take his life. My Mother called for an ambulance but before it arrived, my brother tried to run off. I ran after him and started to panic because he was getting tired. I grabbed him by his belt and tried to hold him up. I began to guide him towards home where I could now see the ambulance and police car waiting. I pushed him towards the police so they could save his life and was shocked when they threw him to the ground and handcuffed him. I felt like I had betrayed him! My mother and I were both crying.

I followed the ambulance to the hospital and then spent several hours waiting for news. After asking at the desk they finally let me in to see him. He was sleeping and the nurse told me that he had refused to drink the bottle of liquid that he needed to drink to make him vomit. I found her very unsympathetic to his situation. It made me angry. I sat with my brother and told him how much I loved him and that I needed him in my life. He opened his eyes and looked at me. He said he loved me too. At that moment, I grabbed his face and poured the liquid down his throat. He got so sick after that but it saved his life.

My brother now lives out West. We never see him, and my brothers have never accepted him for who he is. I try to keep in touch but he always pulls

away. I hope someday that we can be close again and my heartache will go away. I love him with all my heart.

This Little Village

By Jane Burchell

Spring Garden Library Adult Learning Program

This little village has beauty galore
With its mountains and hills
and rivers and more.

Men kept busy cutting
wood for the stoves.
Logs to be sold are saved in droves
Hauling them out with a horse and a sleigh
Its off to the saw mill,
They're on their way.

The women are busy doing their chores
Cooking and baking and
cleaning the floors.
Mothers teach children,
a job they love to do.
Values and morals
And respect are part of it too.

The winter months are cold every day
There's lots of snow from November to May.
Strong winds from the north
makes for bitter cold.
The villagers celebrate, when the snow grows old.

The spring blows in a fresh warm breeze,
The birds are singing their songs in trees.
The flowers are sprouting, through the ground.
The brooks and streams flow strong, all around.

This little village has beauty galore.
With its mountains and hills and
rivers and more.

Evening Sounds

By Betty Dobson

HCLN Board

The early evening sun flickers
through one small window. Young
spring leaves on the nearest tree
glisten as the wind shifts them

in and out of the glow. Sunlight
dribbles diamonds and filigreed
leaves through lace. Unseen

evening sounds converge. Distant
vehicles rumble farther. Base-
board heaters crack and groan.
Dogs compete with the untried
musician next door, but his
piano always wins, if only on

beauty and purpose. The subtle
touch of cool air on my knees
as the wind parts the curtains
ever so slightly. We dance to virgin
refrains and listen for the coming
night. The wind whispers
phrases here and there,
if we stop to listen.

Learning at Lady Hammond

By Carmen Casey

Lady Hammond Learning Program

I like coming here to learn how to read. It is a good place to come. The people are very good to you and they help you to learn. They will help you to learn how to spell and they will also help you get your grade 12. You can come every week. The hours are 5:00 to 8:30. I like to come for a long time because I can read very good. Sometimes I don't come as much as I like because I got a lot of things on the go and I will be out of the city about 7 or 8 weeks of the year. I will be coming for a long time. I like to do more at home but I do not have the time because I work a boat 65 or 70 hours a week and when I am not working I am always doing something. You always learn something when you are here. And I am not very good in doing a story.

Working at Winners is # 1!

By Julie Lynn Stanhope

Keshen Goodman Library Adult Learning Program

I have been with Winners for 10 years. I have been there the longest of all the staff.

They threw me a surprise party. Everybody gave me a card with Mickey Mouse on it. The managers gave me a cake with a sun and rainbows on it. There were different colours. It was white, blue and purple. There were balloons on the cake too.

I work at Winners through a special program at the Job Brokerage Centre.

I am a show processor. I take shoes out of the box and papers and plastics and gel and sort them out in different garbage cans.

I work three days a week. I hope I can stay for another ten years!



Julie Lynn enjoying the holiday party at the Keshen Goodman Library

My Vacation

By Margie Kelbrat

Lady Hammond Learning Program

I went to visit my sister in Virginia. In order to get there we had to take a plane. First, we transferred in Boston to another plane and then we flew to Virginia Beach. I was nervous on the plane because I have a fear of flying.

When we airport, my sister and her husband and children were there to meet us. Then my sister and her family took me and my mom shopping at the mall. Then we went back to her house and had some supper, and after we went sightseeing. The next day she took us to the amusement park and to a big field to pick lots of strawberries.

My sister has a nice place and a big backyard. Her children are very nice and they have a dog named Bailey. My nephew plays in the church choir. I was having so much fun that I did not want to go home. I will return again for another visit someday.



Margie taking a break from the creative writing workshop at the Lady Hammond Learning Program

Dougie's Life

By Dougie Jamieson

Spring Garden Library Adult Learning Program

Bell is my Guinea Pig. She lives in a cage in my home apartment. She squeaks for food when she hears the bag and thinks it is all for her. I tell her to calm down daddy's girl. She tries to climb the cage for fun.

I play floor hockey for the Special Olympics. Now practice is over now but practice will be starting again in the fall. I play against Robert, he is a goalie.

I scored a few goals on him unassisted. I am a good center-man. Hockey gives me self-esteem.

My family helps me a lot. My adopted mother Marion gets me cigarettes at her apartment and gives me some when I need them. She also emails me at school. I have two sisters and two brothers-in-laws. I have a niece and three nephews. My adopted father Walter helps me take my bottles to the Depot. Ed is my real father. I go see him and my step-mother Mo. I visit both my families.

I go to school at the Spring Garden Road Library. We read horoscopes, work on math, and look for obituaries. We eat subs together. I do word searches at home for homework. Sarah thinks I do a wonderful job in the program and is proud.

Going to Camp

By Jean Dignard

Captain William Spry Library, Adult Learning Program

I am going to the Salvation Army Camp at the end of May. Women go at the end of May and men go in early June. Both men and women go to camp in September.

I like to play games and go for walks when I am at camp. People from all over Nova Scotia go to these camps. I meet many nice people there.

Learning Together

By Janice Hudson

Spring Garden Library Tutor

I've been working with my learner, Chris, for the past two years. Like many first-time tutors, I was nervous at the beginning and didn't really know what to expect. However, my fears subsided after my first few sessions with Chris. As I became a more confident tutor, he became a more confident reader.

There's something special about tutoring one-on-one. What I like best about it is that you can personalize the learning experience. I saw early on that Chris has a real thirst for knowledge and loves talking about science, history and philosophy. I've tried to pick up on that by creating a series of readers for him in PowerPoint on subjects that interest him. These have covered everything from Charles Darwin to the

Roman Empire. Finding material that he enjoys reading is inspiring him to read for pleasure. Nothing makes me happier than when he comes to a session brandishing a new book that he's just discovered.

I'm amazed by Chris's progress and would like to think that I can be a small part of the success that will come to him as he develops his reading and writing skills.

For many people, low literacy skills mean limitation and isolation, so it's very thrilling to see the world opening up for Chris and for all of the other learners involved in the Halifax Community Learning Network.

My Reasons for Going to Adult Ed

By Dianne Manuel

Captain William Spry Library Adult Learning Program

My son is in grade 4 and it's really hard for me to help him with his homework. I also find talking with his teacher is a problem because I don't have a high vocabulary and I look young. So, I said to myself that I need some help. I heard about adult education classes at the Captain William Spry Center near my home so one day when I was walking by I decided to go in and register. Now I am here learning.



Spring Garden Road Library volunteer Janice Hudson shares her ideas (and home-made resources) with other tutors at the Keshen Goodman Library Learning Circle

I've never had high expectations or thought that I can learn or be very smart and I may not have much ambition, but I am really going to try my best. This is for me and my kids.

The Story of Growing Up in Halifax

By Kenneth McDow

Keshen Goodman Library Adult Learning Program

When I was growing up in Halifax, I went to school. The name of the school was Bloomfield and it was in the North End. At Bloomfield, the teachers tried to help me to learn to read and write better. I could not read very well. The class was too big for the teacher to help all the students in the class.

It was hard to grow up in the north end when I was a boy. I went to school in the daytime and came home after school and played with other boys outside. We played baseball in the summer and hockey in the winter months. I went to movie shows with my friends in the North End on Saturday afternoons. We mostly liked Westerns. When we would go back to my house, my friends would have lunch with me and then go home. We had fun when I was young living in the North End.

When I was sixteen, I left Bloomfield School to look for a job to help my mother with the rent and groceries. I went looking for a job in Halifax. I walked the streets and looked for a job. It was hard for me because I could not read and write very well. When I would find out about a job, I could not fill in an application very well because I could not read it.

I found a job at the National Fish Company and was delivering the mail for the company to the offices but I did not know how to read the names very well. I changed jobs and started working in the fish plant. I did not have to read and write and I made more money and it was good for me. I worked for the fish plant for four years and then the fish plant laid me off. There was no work for me. I went looking for a job in the A.M. Smith Fish Company and I stayed working with them for three years but I was laid off. There was no work for me. I started looking for a job in Halifax to help me pay my bills and the rent for my apartment in the South End and to help my wife too.

My wife had a baby boy in the hospital in May of 1963. My son's name his David. My father-in-law wanted me to move in with them to help with work around the house. It helped me too. The first year I was married and my first Christmas with my wife was good. My son was six months old and I bought my son lots of toys. On Christmas morning my son liked the toys too. My mother-in-law also liked to buy toys for my son. I had two more sons and a daughter over the next three years: Tony, Terry and Anna. I took my children on vacation in the summer months to see the Canadian countryside. I took my children camping on the weekends. The children liked the campground. The kids liked to go swimming and play around the campsite and go to the arcade. Sometimes we would fish in the lake.



Ken and friends at the Captain William Spry Library

I found a job working in the V.G. Hospital maintenance shop and my job was working on the grounds. I worked hard for my money at the hospital. I worked for years on the grounds until I changed my job. My new job was driving a truck for the hospital and it was a better job for me and my family because I made more money. My new job was picking up parts for the hospital and I worked on the snow at night to clean up the snow on the grounds. I worked for the hospital for 32 years and retired. I have a good pension from the hospital to help my family.

My wife and I had four children. I worked hard for my money and for my family. My children got a good education and my son now lives in Winnipeg where he is a computer designer for the airport. My daughter lives in Victoria where she is a manager at a bank. Another son is in the navy in Halifax and my son Terry lives with me. Now they have children of their own and they are working hard for their children.

My New Home

By Margaret LeBlanc

Captain William Spry Library, Adult Learning Program

I moved into my new home on December 20th. It is in Dartmouth. I like this new home a lot.

I have my own very large room with a private bathroom. The room has a large bed, dresser, television, and book case. There is a large window that looks out on the parking lot.

There are many activities for those who live in this home. There are different activities every day. Some of these activities include Fun and Fitness, Wheel of Fortune, the Price is Right, Baking, Bingo and Crossword. I am happy to be in my new home.



Adnan has a strong desire to learn all he can on almost any topic. He works hard at his reading and has a particular interest in science, space travel and the planets. He was born in Pakistan and his first language is Urdu. He received his High School diploma in Cape Breton and has plans to continue his education in order to get a job. His enthusiasm and cheerfulness is contagious. He is seen here with his tutor, Pat Sims, at the Volunteers Appreciation Pot-luck in April at Keshen Goodman Library.

Open Your Eyes

By Barb Pottier

Captain William Spry Adult Learning Program

It's 5:30 am. The cats are waiting for their breakfast. Why do they not know it is Saturday and I have a day off, not just from work, but from everyone. I could lay here and listen to their cries and let them crawl over my head, or just get up and feed them. I drag myself from bed; the room is dark and cold. I sleep in the nude, so I have learned my way around the house without lights. I just open the fridge for a little light. Sam, as usual, is crying even louder now. I know it would not take long for them to eat. I usually let Sam out for a few minutes and she comes right back, but this is my day to sleep. I open the day to a cold gust of wind. It is an early April morning.

I awake again a few hours later, to hear the birds sing as the sun is up. It's been a long time since I just could enjoy the early morning songs. As I slip away to a state of half awake and half asleep, (Dream World - I was once told), I think how wonderful a place this must be. Here I am; there at last.

Just as I think life can not get any better than this, up I jump with a cat hanging off my bedroom window screen. How long have they been out there? I look at the clock. It is 10:00 am. Where have I been for this long? I grab my PJ's and out to the door I go, feeling a bit guilty, expecting the cold air to bring me back to this beautiful day. I can hear the wind. So as I open the door, I button my last button up to my neck. With a gust of wind grabbing the door out of my hand, in run the cats and with them the warm air travels in to my face. It is spring!

I make my coffee, open the entire windows. Wishing my patio furniture is on the deck. I open the back door; I can not wait for my coffee. I walk out on the deck. The first sounds I hear are the sea gulls, as you know them. Since my granddaughter was small, as our little secret, she and I called them "shit hawks". She thought that was such fun. She could say "shit" and not get in trouble.

My heart is alive with excitement, I grabbed a kitchen chair, my coffee, and the cats and out we go. As usual, Sam has a lot to say and she does not like heights. The deck off the kitchen is about ten feet off the ground. I love it out there because the back yard slopes down, so it is like I am on top of the trees. In the spring that's where you want to be, up high were the birds are nesting. You can look down on them as they feed off the spring treats they have awaited so long.

As I close my eyes, I can hear the wind swirling through the tree tops, howling, singing, "It's spring!" I anticipate a cold gust from the wind, but there is none - just the warmth of the sun. As I sit there, I can feel the wind; it is not going to give in so easily. It's digging down deep to bring out its might, but today the sun has won.

So, open your eyes, spring has begun.

My Vacation

By Robin Nejrup

Keshen Goodman Library Adult Learning Program

To begin my vacation, I go to Acadian Lines and purchase a round trip ticket to Middleton which costs me \$60.00. I arrive at the Quick Way around ten p.m. My Mum and Dad pick me up and we drive back home to their house.

On a nice sunny day we would visit my brother and his wife. They have a nice little farm. On the farm, they have a young donkey that is a pet. As well, they have eight little calves, three chickens and two pigs. My brother is getting two white baby bunnies for his wife for Mother's Day. I am looking forward to seeing them.

I like to go to church where I get to meet family and friends. I enjoy singing hymns and listening to the sermon. The children go to the front of the church and tell stories.

I also enjoy working around the yard picking vegetables out of the garden. Sometimes we go for a drive in the country.

I really enjoy being with my parents.

The Joys of Tutoring

By Cathy Taylor

Keshen Goodman Library Tutor

I find it hard to believe that I've been tutoring at the Keshen Goodman Library for five years now. I thought about tutoring for some time but it took me a while to work up the nerve to make the call. It's a call I've never regretted making though. Ken and I have been working away for a long time and we've made really good progress. Since we first met, I've



*Cathy Taylor catching up with old friend
Lynne Wells-Orchard at the HCLN Annual
General Meeting*

seen great changes not only in his reading, writing and math skills (which have been tremendous) but also in his self confidence. I think though, that the experience has been just as rewarding for me. It's quite a feeling to see someone come so far and feel that you've helped to guide them along their journey. Those opportunities don't come along too often in a person's life and I'm glad I seized it when it did.

The Best Job That I Ever Had

By Jocelyn Morris

Captain William Spry Adult Learning Program

The best job that I ever had would be working at a Carpenter and Reupholster shop. I helped to make beds and furniture, paint, varnish and stain. We built it and repaired it for people on Welfare. I worked from 800am to 500pm. I love doing that job and I do miss it!

I had a lot of jobs and I liked them all. I miss working. I wish that I could be working again. It takes a lot out of me not working. Doing things for other people means every thing to me, because it means give and take not all take and not all give. That is the Truth. I work well with other people.

I have a job now and it is babysitting and I love the children. They are very good children. The older boy is 18 months old and the younger boy is 6 months old.

Some of the things I do with this job are looking after the two boys, cleaning house and washing clothes. When it is nice and sunny outside I put the two boys in the double stroller and go for a walk or to the mall.

Since I started babysitting I have more self-confidence and respect and it makes me feel like I am on cloud nine. And it makes me feel needed and I get to love them and they love me too because the children need love and attention. Because I have a lot of love to give and now I can do so. So it is all give and take.

My Cats

By *Kathy Dobson*

Halifax North Library Adult Learning Program

When Snowball was a kitten, Furball looked after Snowball as if he was one of hers. When Furball wasn't feeling good Snowball went over to where she was laying and laid beside her. He tried to wash her but she wasn't in the mood. She hissed at him so he backed off and watched her from a distance. Snowball did not want to be attacked. Furball didn't like going to the vet's, she didn't like the back and forth. When I was up there the animal doctor suggested that I separated their food dishes. He said that she wasn't getting enough to eat so I did and it worked! She started feeling better in a week or so. Snowball didn't give up on her. He waited until he could sense that she was feeling better. Things are slowly getting better with Furball, although she still hisses at Snowball now and then. Snowball has always thought Furball was his mother.

Mother cats instinctively push their kittens away when they are old enough to fend for themselves. Sometimes a kitten stays with the mother cat and they have to adjust but they never do completely. Snowball tried to be friends with Mittens but Mittens doesn't want any part of his friendship. Cats are very much like people – they like their own space!

The Dance at St. Agnes

By *Julie Lynn Stanhope*

Keshen Goodman Library Adult Learning Program

I went to a dance at St. Agnes Church hall. Everybody was there. We had a DJ from C100.

We went to a baby shower at my aunt Geri and Uncle Bill's house in Dartmouth.

We went to track and field at 6:30 at Westmount School.



*Former Keshen Goodman Coordinator
Melissa Michels visiting the Keshen
Goodman Library holiday party*

I went to work on Monday, Tuesday and Friday from 9:15 to 1:00. I also went shopping for my nephew and I went shopping for mother's day and I am going to another dance tomorrow night. It is at CNIB.

The First Step

by Anonymous

In July, 2007 my husband had surgery and he was unable to do some of the book work and I could not read well enough to understand it all to help him. Therefore he and I got frustrated and said something has to be done. So I picked up the phone and called the library and asked if there was a program for adult literacy. I was talking to Linda Oakley the Program Coordinator at the Captain William Spry Library. It was a Tuesday and I came to the library for an interview that same night. I thought I could start in September but Linda informed me that they had a summer program so I started the next week. She really helped me because I thought I had all summer to think about it and here I am. I probably would have chickened out if I had waited until September. I didn't tell my husband I was doing it until after I made the phone call. Linda worked with me until a tutor started to work with me in December. I am glad I came. I feel I am getting a lot out of it.

Moving to Canada

by Zafey Geberu

Captain William Spry Adult Learning Program

My name is Zafey Alemaw Geberu. I am 29 years old. I came here from Ethiopia in 2000. At first, I was excited to come to Canada because my husband was living here, but I soon discovered that none of this was what I had expected at all.

When I came here, everything was different. I was homesick. I had never lived far away from my family and I missed all my friends. I was pregnant with my daughter, Fray, and getting sick every morning. I didn't speak any English. I didn't like the food or the weather. I used to cry almost every day when my husband went to work. I told my husband, Ata, that I wanted to go back home. He said, "You will be O.K. Don't worry."

As the years went by, Ata and I started a family and tried to get used to life in Canada. I started going to the Halifax Immigrant Learning Center to study English. I didn't finish high school, but I would love to so I can become a nurse. Fray, was born in 2000. I couldn't believe I had a daughter and I was so happy to see her. Two years later, I had a boy, Muse. I was overjoyed because I didn't have a brother: I had five sisters. Since 2005, I have been working as a continuing care assistant. Last year, we were excited to buy our first house. I am delighted to be a Canadian citizen. We are all enjoying Halifax, although I still sometimes complain about the weather.

My Cape Breton Home

By Jane Burchell

Spring Garden Library Adult Learning Program

I was born in a small village called Sugarloaf on the island of Cape Breton, in the year 1940. There were about 20 families living there. In my family there were eight children, six girls and two boys. I was the second born. We were one of the smaller families and we were not very well off. Everyone lived quite close together, which made it easy if someone was in need.

In the spring and summer months the men fished and cut fire wood. The fish that were caught would go to the fish plant in Dingwall to be sold. In winter months their job was logging. They hauled the logs out of the woods by horse and sleigh. Then they were taken to the mill to be sawed and sold.

The General Store was a grocery store and post office combined. The people would gather there in the evening to wait for the mailman to come in from Sydney. I happened to be one of those. I'd go for groceries after school and wait for the mail to come in after nine o'clock. I didn't feel so good about the whole idea. I was only twelve years old. I was very tired and my self-esteem was very low. After the mail came in it had to be sorted so that was more waiting. I had to walk home in the dark. I was in no shape to do school work.

A ship called the S.S. Aspy came from Sydney carrying supplies. The people would travel on it back and forth to Sydney. There was no bus so they traveled on the old Aspy.

So here we are with no electricity in the village until the year 1955. There was no drinking water except from a neighbor's well and a brook for laundry. There were only a couple of cars on the road. Horse and wagon was the main transportation.

The school was made up of one room, with grades primary to twelve the teacher found it difficult to cope.

Winters were horrible with banks of snow from November until May. One storm met the other! I've had lots of fun in the snow but it was nice to see the winter break up.

In summer there was a beach a mile long so we could swim in the ocean and play in the sand.

My father was called to a better paying job at a gypsum plant in Milford. He went and stayed a year and then decided to move the family to Milford. We were unhappy moving from Sugarloaf but we will never forget our Cape Breton Home.

Older and Wiser

By Melita Carvery

Captain William Spry Library Adult Learning Program

When I was a little girl I was very active and always getting into trouble. I didn't care and I did not listen in school. Then something very sad happened to me. My grandmother died when I was nine or ten years old. My grandmother was very special to me. She had looked after me since I was a baby.

So now things are different. I had to go and live with my mom and dad. I really missed my grandmother and I had to adjust to my



Jane shares one of her stories at the Spring Garden Library Holiday Party



Melita with her tutor Stella at the Captain William Spry Library

new environment. Suddenly I had to grow up. I became more responsible. I babysat my nephews and nieces. I helped my older sister. It was a turning point in my life.

Now I am much older. I have learned to take care of myself by eating healthy foods like fruits and vegetables. I believe in helping others when I can. I am more positive, I am even more responsible and I am happy with my life. I am also at peace with myself.

What I Love About Living In Bayers Westwood

By Kathy Dobson

Halifax North Library Adult Learning Program

I like the different programs they have at the Centre. I really like volunteering there. This was my first volunteer job. The staff are very friendly while I am there. I enjoy helping with the children in the child care room. I help with cleaning and other jobs.

I like living in Bayers Westwood. I have a nice apartment I share with a friend. It is a good location near a bus stop.

Sometimes I go on field trips that the Centre have and I help the parents with their children. I look forward to these trips. I have learned knitting and scrapbooking and right now I am trying to learn to crochet. I like meeting new people at social events such as Mother's Day, Christmas and the Yard Sale. I enjoy swimming and bowling and they have it at the Centre for those who want to go.

All in all, my favorite thing about living in Bayers Westwood is the Family Resource Centre! I would like to say thank you to all of the staff at the Centre for their hard work in making it a nice place to go.

Good Feeling

By Barb Pottier

Captain William Spry Public Library

When you wake up in the morning feeling good, you know it is going to be a good day. On my drive to work at 7:30 a.m., the sun is coming up over the horizon. It is so beautiful. I thank God to be alive.

Have you ever found yourself in that spot where you have this overwhelming feeling of peace? Like you wish it would never end? I believe when we get that feeling, it is God standing beside us, to let us know that there is that peace awaiting us, if we just believe and have faith.

I was talking to my daughter one day and she was telling me how her trip to Toronto was. She said “Mom!, I was walking down this quiet street with Alyssa; the leaves were softly falling off the trees. The wind was so warm and Alyssa was rolling around in the leaves, then all of a sudden this feeling came over me that I would like to stay in this very spot forever.” She said, “I would move there if I could feel that way all the time.”

I tried to explain to her it was not the place, it was the moment. I believe that is when God is standing beside you. You have to just enjoy it and open your heart; just let the love fill you up, for however long the moment lasts.

So when you get that little touch from God, just embrace it and pray to God that he will come again.

Callie the Cat

By Evangeline Brown

Captain William Spry Library Adult Learning Program

My cat is not very smart. Her name is Callie. She is a calico cat and she has patches of orange, brown, white, and yellow fur. Her eyes are green. Callie’s tail is long and skinny.

She likes to eat a lot. Callie plays and then she likes to sleep on the couch. I like it when she cuddles with me in bed at night.

Callie does not like strangers. She does not like me to leave her alone. Callie cries when I go, but she greets me warmly when I come home. She is very good company for me!!!



Evangeline and friends enjoy some refreshments at Captain William Spry



Celebrating the festive season at the Spring Garden Road Library

My Favorite Horse Story

By Robert Lowe

Spring Garden Road Adult Learning Program

Big Ben and Ian Miller were the best team in horse jumping until they met up with a new rider; myself. I was riding my favorite Appaloosa horse. It was my turn to ride first and I did not knock any rails over. I have a backup horse which is a German Dulmen. I had a perfect course. Next it was Ian and Ben's turn. They had 8 faults because Ben was tired. I won the competition now there is a new champ in town. Next David took his turn. He had to use my backup horse. He got thrown off because my horse did not like him. He was shaken up but not hurt.

A Positive Outlook

By Anne Kelly

Spring Garden Road Library Adult Learning Program

I have discovered that life is very important because I have been through a lot of things that were good and bad.

I had some special people that died and that is why I think that life is precious. I was very lucky that I knew most of my relatives. I am lucky that I have such wonderful memories. I think that we shouldn't take life for granted.

I believe that some things happen for a reason. I think some people believe and some people don't believe that.

I have learned that if you are negative, then you feel like you can't go on and you won't be productive. I always believe you should say, "I think I can, I think I can, I know I can." I believe that is why I have come so far.

I think you should have confidence in yourself, I have learned if you have confidence you can do anything. Some people feel that they have no confidence but you have to start somewhere. You have to have pride in yourself to feel like you have a purpose.

The Northwind...

By Jane Burchell & Paul Dawson

Spring Garden Road Library Adult Learning Program

The Northwind is not very nice.
It blows strong and cold across the ice.
Over the water and over the seas,
It brings the Springtime and buds to the trees.

The Northwind is not very courteous.
As it blows the sea becomes fierce and tempestuous.
The sailboats are happy as can be,
To know the Northwind is coming over the sea.

The Northwind can be very shy,
As it blows the winter blues to the sky.
The buds on the trees it brings,
And the birds on their branches they sing.

The Northwind can really sting.
It blows all winter waiting for Spring
Bringing Spring's warm and gentle gusts
The Northwind's memory fades to dust.



Jayne Hunter of Literacy Nova Scotia helps out participants in the Personality Dimensions & Learning Styles workshop.



Sharing ideas at the Spring Garden Road Library Tutor Learning Circle.

Everyone involved with HCLN has opportunities to learn and this past year we were lucky to have many workshops and professional development events to choose from. Highlights include an excellent Assessment Tools & Practices workshop with Dr. Pat Campbell of Grassroots Press, an introduction to the new NSSAL math and communications curriculum with David Pilmer and Meredith Hutchings and our own volunteer tutor orientations, Tutor Basics and the Learning Circles workshops.

HCLN learners also had plenty of extra learning opportunities with Jane MacDonald's Advancing Learning Technologies computer classes, creative writing sessions with Jenni Blackmore and a Personality Dimensions & Learning Styles workshop sponsored by Literacy Nova Scotia.



Jenni Blackmore with friends Margaret and Fatima at the Lady Hammond Learning Program creative writing workshop.



Learning together at the Winter session of Tutor Basics at the Captain William Spry Library.

Reading Together, Learning to Go!

This was the second year that HCLN took on a family literacy project in Spryfield and it has been a great success. Veronica McNeil and Avril Lewis developed workshops on sharing books with preschoolers that were offered in partnership with community service providers in Spryfield. The Learning to Go workshop uses a book bag filled with goodies including family literacy tips, picture books and craft supplies to encourage parents to teach their children about the joys of reading and learning games. A Make a Book workshop that gave parents and toddlers a chance to work together on a book about them was also a big hit.



Working together at the Personality Dimensions & Learning Styles Workshop at Keshen Goodman Public Library

My Writing:

Thank you to:



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