



ROGUE WIND

YEARBOOK 2010

A year of learning with...

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

The Halifax Community Learning Network (HCLN) is one of thirty-two 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 and the Spring Garden Road Public Library.

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 Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning web site at:

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

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Introduction

I am pleased and proud to introduce this book of writing by students and friends of the Halifax Community Learning Network. While reading the stories in preparation of the yearbook, I was constantly reminded of what a gift it is to work with such a remarkable group of people, who despite difficult obstacles, remain determined to better themselves and be more active members of our community.



*Working on the HCLN yearbook in my favourite place,
my cabin in Cape Breton*

Everyone who studies at HCLN makes progress, but one student in particular deserves special mention. Michael Kamara has managed to juggle a full-time job, taking courses at the Flexible Learning & Education Centre and a busy family life to attend tutoring at the Captain William Spry Library. As if this isn't enough, he recently became involved in fundraising for amputees like himself back in Sierra Leone. His story, and others, show just how much individuals can learn and achieve when given the opportunity.

Rogue Wind represents the efforts of many: staff, volunteers, community partners and most of all, the excellent work being done by those who attend Adult Learning Programs at HCLN. It is a privilege to help such dedicated students and a joy to share in their success. I think one of our greatest achievements at HCLN is providing a comfortable place for people to learn and helping them to gain the skills needed to share their stories. Everyone has a story to tell and this book represents just a few of the many waiting to be told.

Enjoy, and I wish you all a wonderful summer!

~Denise Morley

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations who have provided support this year and helped to make HCLN programs a success.

The list is long, and the contributions range from the donation of free books from the Bookmark Book Store to the awesome computer and design skills of Wil Gamble and Matt Likely- and so much more. Strategic Transitions contributed excellent literacy software to all programs. Tom Margeson of Lassonde Industries kept us in Oasis Juice all year. Others volunteered their time to deliver workshops.

A very big thanks to all of you:

Ann Marie Downie	Avril Lewis
Ben Gale	Bonnie Boivin
Bookmark Book Store	Bryan Nesbitt
Carolyn Langlands	Cathy Campbell
Cheryl Black	Dalhousie University Math Circles Program
Danielle Cox	Darla Muzzerall
Darren Winter	David Pilmer
Dorette Pronk	Gord Gamble
Greg Corey	Halifax Public Libraries
Heather Lauther	Helen Thexton
Jason Sharpe	Jayne Hunter
Jen Hill	Jenni Blackmore
John DeLuca	Karen Gatien
Kevin Crick	Kristina Parlee
Linda Oakley	Literacy Nova Scotia
Lorette Melanson	Lynne Wells-Orchard
Marie David	Matt Likely
Meredith Hutchings	Michael Hamm
Minuteman Press Halifax	National Adult Literacy Database
Nova Scotia Business Inc.	Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning
Oatmeal- Simple Graphic Design	Pat Campbell
Pat Roberts	Radenka Vidovic
Ron Bulmer	Sandy Crocker
Sarah Gillis	Sarah Wenning
Scott Taylor	Sherri Butcher
Strategic Transitions	Tom Margeson
Tracy Hine	Tracey Jones
Troy Myers	Volunteer Canada
Wil Gamble	

HCLN Board



Denise Morley, Cathy Campbell and Ben Gale catch up at the AGM

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Michael's Project: the Halifax Sierra Leone Amputee Support Committee

By Michael Kamara

My name is Michael Kamara and I am an amputee from Sierra Leone. This is my story.

The eleven-year civil war in Sierra Leone left thousands of people dead or with a permanent disability such as an amputation. Entire villages and schools were destroyed and two million people were displaced.

In 1999, the rebels attacked my hometown of 'Masiaka' during a time that I was visiting my family. When the rebels came and opened fire wildly in the town, I was running to escape from the house when a bullet hit my left leg. I hid in the bush for three days with no medical attention. Later a friend carried me to the government troop camp and they took me to the hospital. There was no way to save my leg and it was amputated above the knee.

I immigrated to Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada with my wife, three year old daughter and nephew in 2007.

I came to Canada with very little English and no High School Diploma. I started classes at the Cunard Learning Center and later went to the Flexible Learning Education Centre (FLECs) where I found reading, writing and math were my biggest challenges. I went to the Captain William Spry Adult Learning Program for help. I was highly lucky to meet with Linda Oakley and David Porter who helped me to improve my reading, writing and math. I faced a lot of obstacles during my high school studies. My wife was the breadwinner in the house and became pregnant during that time. I found a



Former president of the Sierra Leone Amputee Soccer Club, Michael Kamara.

job working in the hospital as a patient attendant through out the night. In the morning, I would head to school. It has been difficult at times, but there is no option, because I don't want to ask for help from social services.

We do have much to be thankful for. We thank God for the new baby whose name is David. With the help of my tutor at the library and the great effort of my schoolteachers, I will complete my High School Diploma and I will graduate on June 28, 2010. I would like to thank every one that contributed to the success of my high school completion. I would also like to encourage anyone who wants to continue his/her education to go to the Halifax Community Learning Network for help.

After my graduation in June, I'm looking forward to going to the Nova Scotia Community College in September 2010 to study Human Services for two years at the waterfront Dartmouth Campus. I am on the waiting list. Eventually, I am interested in working in the area of prosthetics and orthotics. I would like to help people who have problems like I do. I hope to work as a technician to help people who have lost their limbs.

In the meantime, I have started to raise funds through the Halifax Sierra Leone Amputee Support Committee (HSLASC). The aims of this organization are to heal the psychosocial stress of the amputees and help them to be self-reliant. My goal is to find support for two hundred amputees in five communities for education, micro-credit enterprises, skills training such as tailoring, computer, radio repair, shoe repair etc. This will foster hope and happiness to war amputees in Sierra Leone.

I have been working hard to start a non-profit organization that will support the education of amputees and the children of amputees. Through HSLASC, I am hoping for support from individuals and organizations that are interested in working with and assisting disabled people. Every donation helps. \$10 can provide school supplies for one elementary school child for one year.

Another way to heal the wounds of war is through sports. When I lived in Sierra Leone, I became involved in the Single Leg Amputee Sports Club. There are now six regional teams in the country with approximately 200 members. Playing soccer helps to promote recreation and rehabilitation to amputees.

If you want to know more about my project or to donate to Halifax Sierra Leone Amputee Support Committee, please don't hesitate to contact me at: 902- 477 7151/ 293 5296 or email: Halifax.amputeesupport@gmail.com or mikesillah@gmail.com

You can also write to me at: 126 Lavender Walk Halifax NS. B3R 1E9.

Message from Jenni Blackmore

It surprises me how much we take literacy skills for granted. For instance, I'm still absolutely astounded that my little grandson can read. He on the other hand gives me the eyes rolled, slump-shoulder-sigh (which roughly translated, with parentheses of exasperation, means 'What else did you expect!') in reply to my amazement. He obviously doesn't think it's a Biggie!

I think, and I hope, that I will always think it's a Biggie to look at a series of squiggles on a page and somehow translate them into words, which then string together into meaning which is transferred directly into the reader's brain by someone (the writer) who is not even there. Of course this is amazing!

I can clearly remember, as a child, staring intently at a page of text, willing the story to jump into my head without that bothersome intermediate requirement, reading. The illustration that intrigued me the most was of a giant in my sparsely illustrated volume of Grimm's Fairy Tales. That darn' story just wouldn't transfer to my head, circumventing by some strange alchemy, the need for me to be able to read. Perhaps it was that fairy tale giant who kept pushing me, a bit harder, a bit further and luring me on with all kinds of wicked tricks and promises until finally one painfully slow word after another I learnt to read his story.

The ability to read and also to explore the flip side of the literacy coin, to write, to share one's thoughts and experiences with other readers is a priceless gift. Ask anyone who at an early age didn't have a tireless giant or other mentor constantly encouraging them along the lines of illegible squiggles and were forced to spend a part of their life without reading. My praises and deep felt gratitude go to all the people who work with literacy programs. Through their efforts lives are enriched and ultimately, books such as this very special

book are written. Congratulations to all the contributors. These may be the first of your words shared in print but they certainly don't need to be the last. Keep writing!

Message from Ann Marie Downie

Executive Director, Literacy Nova Scotia

Learning is a journey and it gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the evidence of the learning journeys so many HCLN learners have taken over the past year. Congratulations to all of you who have participated in HCLN's programs and congratulations for sharing your writings with others. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to witness your hard work and commitment.

Literacy Nova Scotia is committed to supporting adult literacy and essential skills learning wherever it happens. We want to support learning and provide opportunities to celebrate. One of those opportunities is the annual Adult Learners' Week celebration. This year the theme was opening possibilities through learning. Many learners described in their contest submissions the possibilities raised through their learning journeys.

Shannon Bridger, one of the contest winners, said something in her essay that has inspired me and which I would like to share with you. "As adult learners it can be a difficult experience trying to achieve our goals. We have jobs to keep, children to raise, learning disabilities, a lack of self-confidence and painful personal issues. If we can overcome those obstacles, roads that we thought we could not travel are suddenly open to us. We can develop careers that we once thought unattainable, we can live lives that we can be proud of and each of us can exude the greatness that we hold deep within us." Shannon showed me that there are always possibilities around the next corner that we never dreamed could happen for us.

Another way we support learners in their learning journey is through the Learning Beacon. The Learning Beacon is an on-line magazine developed for learners. We include timely pieces on topics like patient rights and payday loans. But, the most fun is reading the stories sent to us for the Community Project by learners from all over the province. Our map of Nova Scotia is starting to fill up with stars. Click on a star and you get to read about what it

is like to live in that community. It is the writings of the learners that make the Learning Beacon lively and exciting.

Learning is a personal journey in many ways. Often only the learner and their teachers really see the progress. But when people share their stories, we see the evidence of the learning. That is why the stories we will read in this yearbook are so important. Each person is sharing the evidence of their learning and that is a great gift to all of us.

Message from Joshua Judah

I am inspired by the hard work and courage of the many HCLN students. We all know the value of education, but committing your efforts to adult learning, especially when you have so many other daily demands on your time, can be difficult. The education process can also be hard, confusing and frustrating. I am overjoyed that we have more than 150 students with the determination to undertake this journey.



Josh Judah & Don Adams at the HCLN AGM

I am also so happy to live in a community in which 150 tutors, board members and individuals with computer skills are willing to give more than 5,000 hours of volunteer service. It has been my experience that it is usually busy people, with very little free time in their schedule, who are the people that come forward as volunteers.

It is to the credit of everyone involved that this year some students have passed their GED or successfully moved on to other programs including the Cunard Learning Centre and the Nova Scotia Community College. It is also wonderful that other students wrote their first stories for the National Adult Literacy Database, the Learning Beacon or this Yearbook. Plus, other

students gained important job related skills that helped them get promotions at work.

Our Network is extremely lucky to have the great work and commitment of our Program Coordinators. Jen Hill, Linda Oakley and Pat Roberts have all done an outstanding job.

Our Network Coordinator Denise Morley continues her great work at HCLN and to the cause of adult education. She is amazing.

Message from Cathy Campbell

Adult Education Coordinator, Adult Education Division
Department of Labour and Workforce Development

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work done by the many adult learners who receive tutoring through HCLN. It takes a great deal of courage to return to learning, particularly for those who have been out of school for a long time.

HCLN has provided tutoring to over 140 adult learners this year. This would not have been possible without the many individuals who volunteered their time as tutors and the staff who supported their efforts. Once again, HCLN provided a number of high quality training and professional development opportunities for its tutors, including the always successful Learning Together event that was held in April.

Special thanks must go to Denise Morley for the many hours that she puts in to administering the work done by HCLN. Your dedication to your work is truly inspiring!

There are many others who work behind the scene to make it possible for so many adult learners in Halifax to receive tutoring. This includes the volunteer board of HCLN and the Halifax Public Library that provides the space for our adult learners and tutors to meet free of charge. The time you contribute is very much appreciated.

As part of the Department of Labour and Workforce Development, the Adult Education Division continues to support adult Nova Scotians who want to improve their reading, writing and math skills. For those who want

to gain a high school credential or equivalency, there is the option through our partner organizations to complete an adult high school diploma or to gain a high school equivalency through writing the GED test. For more information, please visit our website at www.goNSSAL.ca.

Message from Sandy Crocker

Another year of success stories and hard work on the part of the learners, tutors and coordinators. It is easy to see why the tutors go the extra mile; they have coordinators and learners who do the same. As a result, HCLN and the Halifax Public Libraries have an atmosphere conducive to learning and growing. The final outcome can be measured by the GED accomplishments, the professionalism of everyone involved, the milestones achieved by the learners and the stories written for this yearbook.

A big thank you to everyone for making your success our success.

Message from Jen Hill

Dr. Seuss 's Oh! The Places You'll Go! begins like this:

“Congratulations! Today is your day. You're off to Great Places! You're off and away! You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.

You'll look up and down streets. Look'em over with care. About some you will say, “I don't choose to go there.” With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet, you're too smart to go down a not-so-good street.”

If you've never read this book – you should – it's one of my favourites.

I decided to quote Dr. Seuss because I wanted



*Jen Hill at the Halifax North
Christmas Party*

to say how impressed I am with what everyone in the program has achieved this year. It is amazing to see the “places everyone has gone”! Several people really improved their reading, someone got his driver’s license, a few people wrote the GED and passed, lots of people improved their computer skills, people who have never written before wrote for the yearbook or the Learning Beacon, some applied to Cunard School and one student is getting her high school diploma! It is amazing to see all this happen!

When most people join the program, new tutors and new learners alike, they seem very nervous. I can see them thinking “Can I really do this?” My favourite part of my job is watching that change and seeing people’s confidence grow. I feel so fortunate to be part of this program.

I’d like to say thank you to all the learners and the tutors for a fabulous year. Your hard work is noticed and very much appreciated! Thank you also to the patient and helpful library staff, Denise, Sandy, Tracey, Avril and everyone at Literacy Nova Scotia for the all opportunities the learners, tutors and I have had this year.

Have a great summer everyone!

Message from Pat Roberts

“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

This quote from Emerson sums up well the Adult Literacy Program at Keshen Goodman: enthusiastic! We had tutors volunteer over 1500 hours of their time and we helped close to 40 learners move towards achieving their goals this past year.

This was my second year as Coordinator at Keshen Goodman and I continue to be amazed by the unbelievable generosity and willingness of our tutors to help their students.



Pat handing out door prizes at the Keshen Goodman Christmas Party

Our tutors gladly participated in training courses throughout the year, as well as shared their experiences in workshops and electronically. Quite simply, without tutors our program would not exist and we profoundly thank them.

Once again we had a wide range of learners this year, from those who simply needed a few sessions to prepare for a particular GED test or apprenticeship exam, to those who have been working with us on long-term goals for several years. All of them brought to the program an energy and enthusiasm which is infectious and for which we thank them.

We had some welcome additions to our computer software programs this year, including Word Q, Inspiration and Kidspiration. Four laptop computers are available to us now and get used during each session. The word prediction software, Word Q, has been particularly helpful in enabling learners with spelling or eye-to-hand coordination issues to complete stories with relative ease. In fact, one of our learners wrote her first story ever thanks to this technology which allowed her to simply click on words much more easily than struggling to spell them out on paper.

The library staff at Keshen Goodman are outstanding and we truly thank them for all of their assistance and guidance throughout the year. Many have come to know our tutors and learners on a first name basis and welcome them to the branch each week.

Thanks, as well, to my fellow Coordinators, Linda Oakley and Jen Hill. It has been great working with you again this year. Even though we don't often get to meet face-to-face, I always appreciate your support and advice. And, finally, a special thank you to Denise Morley who is a constant source of inspiration and encouragement in the always challenging field of adult literacy. Thank you for a fabulous year and here's hoping our passion for literacy grows even more next year! As Don Ward said, "Enthusiasm is contagious; [let's] start an epidemic."

Inspiration™ and Word Q™ Workshops

Meredith Hutchings

I work with the Department of Labour and Workforce Development as one of the Curriculum Consultants for the Adult Learning Program in Nova Scotia. I am lucky to be able to travel around the province providing information and support to the programs funded through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning. This year, I visited the Halifax Community Learning Network to introduce tutors to two computer software programs, Inspiration™ and Word Q™.

These workshops happened because the company which sells these software packages, Strategic Transitions, wanted to make a gift of some software to an adult learning program in Nova Scotia. HCLN was given copies of these software programs to install on computers used by students and tutors of HCLN.

So, let me tell you a bit about each of these programs. Inspiration™ is a good name for one of these programs because it inspires people to write. Inspiration™ encourages you to brainstorm lots of ideas about a topic, and to organize these ideas into logical categories. You can easily reorganize your ideas by simply dragging them around the computer screen and dropping them into a different category. You can jazz up your brainstorm by adding pictures, differently shaped text boxes, and colourful letters or fonts. Whenever you are ready, you can just press one button to see how these ideas look as just words on the page, without all of the colour and pictures. You can switch back and forth between these two ways of seeing your ideas until you are happy with what you have written.

Word Q™™ helps you write in a different way. As you start to type out your words and ideas, Word Q™ gives you suggestions of words that you might be starting to type. You can listen to each of these word suggestions, and even hear sentences to clear up spelling confusion about homonyms, (words that sound the same but are spelled differently). If the word you are trying to type is listed, you just select it and the program inserts this word into your writing. Word Q™ speeds up the writing process, freeing you to think up more interesting ideas without getting bogged down with spelling struggles. You can also have Word Q™ read back what you have written. Hearing your

work can help you improve the quality of your written work as well as reduce grammar and spelling mistakes.

These two programs can even be used together, so you can more easily spell as you brainstorm and organize your ideas. I understand that some of the writing in this yearbook is the result of those who have worked with Word Q and Inspiration for the first time.

I really enjoyed meeting many of the tutors who are involved with HCLN as we explored some of the ways that Inspiration™ and Word Q™ can help with writing. If you have used either one of these programs, I would really like to hear what you think about them.

Meredith Hutchings

Curriculum Consultant, Adult Learning Program

Adult Education Division

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The LNS Learner Services Project

Over the past two years 2008-2010, Learner Service, Literacy NS, has been pleased with the support, encouragement, and interest received from the Halifax Community Learning Network. We thank each learning network (both learners and practitioners) for:

- their contribution in a province wide survey,
- their participation in focus group meetings,
- presenting at the Learner Service Conference held in Truro, April 12 and 13, 2010
- inviting the learner service consultant to present at the 2009 Annual General Meeting, and
- allowing the learner service consultant to visit two of the learning networks to speak with both practitioners and learners around success stories as well as issues and/or concerns in adult learning.

Thank you for your great ideas and the professional demeanor demonstrated while communicating your ideas. We wish the learners and their practitioners success in future learning opportunities.

The Learner Service Advisory Group are delighted that we were able to provide you with a conference on “Meeting Diverse Needs”. We are also pleased to send learning networks assistive technology support and it is our hope that your learning network will use the technology with learners requiring reading, writing, and organizational support.

Congratulations to all the learners whose stories are included in the yearbook. We certainly value what each of the learners have to say and are thrilled when they take the time to inform us of success stories and how they overcome their challenges to meet their goal.

Keep up the good work Halifax Community Learning Network!
~Ben Gale, Learner Services Project, Literacy Nova Scotia

Wonderful to Know You

By *Avril Lewis*

This year I was asked if learners and tutors of HCLN would like to pilot a new set of workbooks called "The Active Reader" which are being written by Linda Kitley-Bradley and edited by Dr. Pat Campbell for Canadian adult learners, published by Grass Roots Press in Alberta. This was an exciting offer in the first case, because this will be the first set of truly Canadian workbooks that we have ever had at our disposal as tutors and



Avril and Barry celebrate Volunteer Week at the Captain William Spry Library

instructors. As well as reading about international figures like the Dalai Lama and Jane Goodall, Canadian learners will be able to read about Olympians, Alexandre Bilodeau and Clara Hughes; singer, Susan Aglukark and sculptor, Bill Reid; learn about the settlement of the Canadian Prairies; or Acadians in Atlantic Canada; as well as reading on topics of global interest such as the environment, or physical and mental health issues. We are now working on the highest level covered for Pre-GED learners, but eventually there will be a book available at five levels from beginner onwards.

Along the way, I was able to recruit learners and tutors from all HCLN programs. I want to give a big thank you to Jen Hill, Linda Oakley and Pat Roberts who helped me find pairs who might be interested in helping and went out of their way to help in any way they could to keep the print deadlines of the books we have worked on so far.

For a number of years I have been doing some initial training for HCLN tutors and have always been impressed by the calibre of those who volunteer. Piloting these books has given me the opportunity to meet up again with tutors who had attended a tutors' course, or meet and get to know some outstanding tutors and learners for the first time. I want to especially mention the following: Linda and Dyanne, my learner Barb, Sharon and Larry, Kay-

Ann and Mary, Sandi and Paul, Julie and Keith, Jane and Sarah, Latoya and April.

I want to say an enormous thank you all for piloting these materials for me and for other learners across the country. I was extremely impressed with the thoughtful commitment of all the tutors and the enthusiasm of the learners. You are all amazing people and it was my privilege to have the opportunity of working with you.

Smith's Cove

By John Hill

I grew up in Smith's Cove, Nova Scotia, where it would snow during the winter. With a Massey Ferguson twelve horse power tractor I would have to plow the driveway. Sometimes the snow would be heavy and, losing its grip, the tractor would slide sideways. Other times we would put a snowblower on the front of the tractor in order to blow the snow out of the driveway. Sometimes when the tractor wasn't working I would have to shovel the snow. My friends and I would take crazy carpets and toboggans and if the hill was steep enough, we would slide down the thing night and day. With or without a friend, I would hunt and kill rabbits and take them home and cook them for food.

My brothers and sister and I once in awhile would take the car and drive about ten miles to a lake where we had a cottage. In the winter we would skate on the lake but in the spring, after my family and I had opened the cottage, we would put our own retractable wharf out and sometimes assemble a raft and anchor it about eighty feet off shore. We would have to hook up the pump and gas stove. Some cleaning and painting were done to the cottage.

When summer arrived we would swim, barbeque and stay overnight. Also we would paddle the canoe in the lake. Sometimes my sister, brother and I would leave early on the road. We would go as far as we could travel before my parents caught up to us. Usually we would travel about three miles.

Another thing I would do is on July fourteenth, the community back at Smith's Cove would volunteer to cook food and run booths for games, which we called Good Times Day. Another area in Bear River there was a grease

pole. Mostly men and boys would attempt to walk to the end of the pole while it would bounce up and down and sideways to claim a prize. There was food, drink, games and a dammed area to swim.

In the brooks back near my home I would fish for brook trout with my friend. One or both of us would roll the fish in leaves and bury them in hot coals from a fire we made. When the fish were cooked we would eat them. I also used to mow lawns, two cemeteries, our lawn and some neighbours' lawns. That would earn me spending money.

I had a bicycle and skateboard to use, they were mine. My father had a small sailboat built with a drop keel. With that thing we could beach the boat. We would sail the boat near Bear Island.

I guess it was a nice area to live. Maybe I will visit the area again.

Zombies

By Alix Hare

Zombies are the scariest monsters that have been seen in movies to date. In recent years the changes that have been made to them have increased how scary they are. The popularity of zombies has increased since these changes. Zombies are the undead; it has always been known that once something dies it is gone forever. It is horrifying to think something so evil can come from someone who was loved and had died.

Zombies are gruesome, and it's not an easy thing to kill a zombie unless you have a gun and can shoot them in the head. Most times in the movies people have to defend themselves with knives or other objects in their environment, thus making it a bloody affair.

Zombies were once our family, friends, neighbours. The idea of having someone you loved try to eat you is horrifying, not to mention the fact that you would have to kill that once-loved person to save yourself.

Zombies are the scariest monsters to hit the movies because they make you think of things you really don't want to imagine. Zombies are very gross in appearance, and they only want to eat us. This means these movies are

always all horror; there is no falling in love with them or making a friend of one. The biggest change in a new zombies movie is that they can run. This change in the behavior of the zombies has increased how frightening they are and thus increased their popularity as a top horror movie to rent.

The Olympic Torch Relay

By *Evangeline Brown*

I think the Torch Relay was a good experience for Nova Scotia. It only happens once in a blue moon. Sidney Crosby was very exciting to see carrying the Torch. He was very excited to see all the people who showed up to greet him. He didn't expect it. Children and adults alike were very proud of Sidney carrying the Olympic Torch. It was a big change from playing hockey.

I watched the program on T.V. and found it was very interesting and educational to know that Canada supports the Olympics. There will be skating, ski runs, and other sports. I can't wait for it to start and I hope Canada wins a lot of medals. I know they can do it! It will make all Canadians proud.



Evangeline receives her certificate of achievement from Coordinator, Linda Oakley

Thanksgiving 2009

By *Jane Burchell*

On the evening of October eighth, I received a phone call from Paul and Heather Dawson inviting me to a Thanksgiving supper at their house. We planned on having dinner on October 9 at seven o'clock. Paul was to pick me up and take me to his house. I gladly accepted



Jane and Paul working together at the Spring Garden Road Library

the invitation.

When I arrived there was another guest, an older gentleman named Peter. We settled in and began an enjoyable conversation about the weather. Peter was a good conversationalist on his subjects, which included his life on the ships.

I must mention the family dog. What a cute little fellow! He played around everyone to get attention. Beau rushed up on the chesterfield and darted through the rooms.

Soon dinner was prepared and ready to serve. It was delicious barbeque turkey and all the dressings. After the appetizing dinner, we set about and relaxed while Heather came in with dessert. Homemade gingerbread! It was scrumptious. I gobbled it down without leaving a crumb.

After dessert Paul brought out his guitar and gave us a tune but everyone fell asleep because they were so full of turkey. A lovely evening was had by all.

My Learning Journey

By Kerry Ann Fitzpatrick

My new journey to learning began when my son Cody was four months old. I felt I needed to learn more to become a better mother. With help from a family friend I was introduced to “Healthy Beginnings”. This is where I met Amy. She would visit me once a week to see how Cody and I were doing. She told me about the program “Bridging the Gap”. This



Kerry and her tutor Mary learning together at Keshen Goodman

program would give me an opportunity to meet people and learn new skills.

I continued with this program for eight months. My tutor then introduced me to the Literacy program at the Library. I have met many nice people over the past few years and I truly appreciate all their help.

In the fall of 2009 I met my new tutor, Mary and we began to meet at the library on Fridays. I enjoyed being at the Library, however I found it difficult to concentrate. I was distracted very easily and had difficulty learning.

One day in January we were going to meet at the Library but I was unable to get there. When I called Mary to tell her I could not come I had an idea. I asked her if she would mind coming to my home. We contacted Pat and explained the situation and she agreed that it might work well.

We have accomplished a lot during the past few months. I feel very comfortable and relaxed and therefore I believe my ability to learn is improving. I have found a quiet environment works better for me.

One of my goals was to be able to read to my son Cody. I have begun to do that and I am very proud of this.

I am very thankful to all the people who have helped me on my learning journey. I appreciate the program and the volunteers. I want to continue my learning so that I can help Cody when he starts school and eventually I hope to get a job. Thanks again Pat and Mary for all your help.

Volunteering with HCLN

By Bonnie Boivin

It seems like a long time ago that I contacted Denise Morley to talk about doing my Master of Education Practicum with the Halifax Community Learning Network. For many years I have wanted to be a literacy tutor, but never had the time to volunteer. This was my opportunity to find out about the Literacy community in Nova Scotia, and to help someone with their learning goals. It was September 2009, and even though she was not sure if she had funding to open her programs, Denise was in full motion and willing to talk to me about my Practicum.

Denise needs no introduction to those who work with her, but I feel it is important to say a few things about her. She is enthusiastic, funny, energetic,

welcoming, inclusive, and dedicated to the work of the Community Learning Networks in Nova Scotia. I could not have chosen a better mentor for my Practicum. Denise immediately got me involved in meetings and Tutor Training workshops, and she gave me a wide assortment of reading material to review. Her knowledge of Literacy issues and resources is vast, and I learned a great deal very quickly.

I was assigned a learner in late October, and it was a good fit for both of us. She is working towards writing her GED, and we have been focussing on Language Arts. I look forward to our weekly meetings at

the Keshen Goodman Library where we work together on reading, grammar, and writing skills. While we work on these literacy skills, she is teaching me about how to be a tutor, and I often think that I am learning more than she is! Tutoring is a rewarding experience, and making a personal connection with a very special person (you know who you are!) is a special gift that my involvement with HCLN has given me.

Pat Roberts is the Co-ordinator of the Keshen Goodman Library, and her contribution to HCLN is very appreciated by all of the tutors and learners who work with her. Pat is always calm, never ruffled, and keeps us all organized and on track. Whenever I have had a question or needed direction, Pat has been there to help me. If I need information or a tutor resource, Pat always comes through. She is an invaluable member of the HCLN team. I know that Linda Oakley and Jen Hill are equally wonderful in their work at the Captain William Spry, Spring Garden Road, and Halifax North Libraries.

One of the things that Denise asked me to do, as part of my Practicum, was to facilitate Tutor Learning Circles where tutors could get together and share ideas and best practices. We held two sessions during the winter, and



Bonnie at the Tutor Learning Circle at the Spring Garden Road Library

it was very nice to get ideas from other tutors and to share resources. It is often difficult for tutors to get together, so these events were ideal for finding support and making connections. I also facilitated a session at the Bedford Sackville Learning Network, and met some great people out there who are working with learners.

On April 24th Avril Lewis and I worked together to present a workshop on using Portfolio and Goal Setting with learners. Working with Avril was a wonderful experience, and (again!) I learned so much from the planning and implementation of the workshop. We had a terrific group attend our event, and hopefully they went away with some ideas to use with their learning partners.

As I look back at my Practicum experience with the Halifax Community Learning Network I am amazed by the talented people I have met, the dedicated learners who attend HCLN programs, and the impressive commitment they all have to lifelong learning. I look forward to continuing on with HCLN as a tutor and to stay involved with all the various Tutor training workshops and activities. I have learned a great deal about learning, tutoring, and teaching, and want to extend a huge “Thank You” to everyone involved in my learning. See you in September!

Letter to Mike Weir

By Robert Lowe

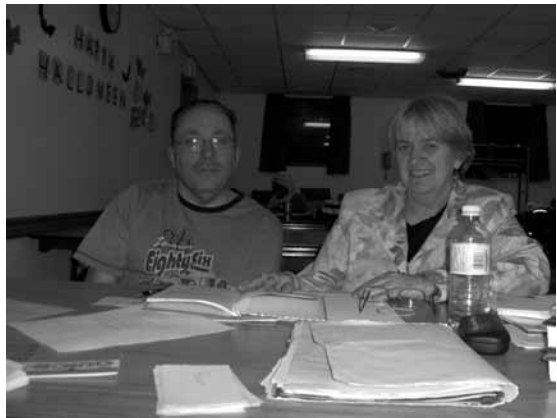
To Mike Weir

My name is Robert Lowe.

I golf with the Special Olympics at Ashburn Golf course.

I am your biggest fan.

I hope you do well this year in golf.



Robert and his tutor Joan working together at the Spring Garden Road Library

I hope you come down to see us.

I live in Halifax on Oxford Street.

I take golf, figure skating, and bowling.

I take reading and writing and computer at the Halifax Public Library.

Do you want to come to a party on June 3, 2010?

I went to Chester and played golf in a tournament.

We won the medals and the trophy at the tournament.

My First Grandchild

By Melita Jackson

I am so happy and excited, getting ready before the baby comes home. It can be very busy with things like having a baby shower, buying baby clothes and other things. I hope with the Lord's blessing, everything will go alright with my daughter's delivery. I hope he will be a healthy baby boy. Today is April 8th, 2010. My grandchild is all most here. Daughter is feeling a lot of pressure pains. I hope I am ready when he comes. Things are moving kind of fast!

Folk Tale

By Madina Uwizeyimana

Once upon a time there was a king and queen. They lived in a good land with their daughter. Three years later the king separated with the queen. The king found another small bad land with a small house. The queen and her daughter were living badly because thee king didn't give them food and a cow to milk.

After three years the king married; he took care of his new wife nicely. A year later, the wife became pregnant She had a baby girl. When the girl was ten years old, the king's daughter from his first marriage asked if her mother can get the good land, but the king gave the girls a condition. The girls' names

were Nyabwangu and Nyabuairera. The exam was to leave the land and to go far, far away.

The girls were able to meet a woman who lived far, far away. When they met, the woman gave them water in buckets and she told them not to open the buckets until they got home because she was a magician.

Nyabwangu didn't wait. She opened her bucket before they got home. The water was turning into silver, gold and many jewels. She was happy to see the shiny things. Because their father promised that he would give the land to their mothers if they returned with gold. Nyabucurara reminded her that they had promised the magician that they would not open the bucket before they got home. She didn't listen to her because she was living happily with her father. Nyabucurara didn't open hers because she wanted to keep her promise.

Before they got home the king ordered his men to put out a carpet in the yard to put the treasure on. When the girls returned home, the king was very happy and welcomed them. He told the daughter who lived with him to open her bucket first. So she opened her bucket happily because she knew that there was gold, silver and many jewels in it.

Unfortunately she couldn't find the jewels. Instead, she got all sorts of insects and small animals like moths, flies, mosquitoes, wasps, spiders, small scorpions, crickets, grasshoppers, owls, mice, gophers, groundhogs, prairie dogs, skunks, bats, snakes, cobras, frogs centipedes, ants snails and worms. After that the king was disappointed because his favorite daughter had embarrassed him.

The king didn't want Nyabucurara to open her bucket. Nyabucurara was upset and she started to sing, "Oh father, you promised me that when I returned from far, far away you would give my mother the good land. Why don't you want me to open my bucket? Maybe there is something good inside of my bucket. Please can I open my bucket?" When she repeated the song three times, her father told her that if her bucket had insects and animals, like Nyabwangu's bucket the king would order his men to kill her. Nyabucurara was nervous. She opened the bucket. Inside was gold, silver and many jewels.

The king was very happy. He ordered his men to kill a cow for meat and to bring his first wife to the good land. So the king and his first wife lived together again and they lived happily ever after.

Rogue Wind

By John Hill

We were in a sailboat and it was windy. The waves were high, the seas were rough and crashing over the deck of the ship. I climbed out on deck to bring the main sail in.

I had a safety belt on and a lanyard. I stepped on the deck and a rogue wind hit me at the shoulder height. And off the boat. It brought the main sail in. As I was climbing into the boat another rogue wind hit. I fell inside the boat. The boat rolled over.



John and his tutor David working together at the Halifax North Library

My Experience as a Volunteer Tutor

By Jane Bolivar

In the spring of 2009 I approached Jen Hill at the Spring Garden Road Library about becoming a tutor. It is something that I always wanted to do but never felt I had the time before. I feel so fortunate because no sooner was I ready to embrace the role - and Jen had me oriented and invited me in to shadow other tutors. I also attended some Saturday workshops and always left feeling excited and totally motivated.

My luck turned even better when I was matched with an amazing lady in September. We have a wonderful and productive time at our Thursday evening sessions. We work very hard together and I know challenge and motivate each other. I've seen tremendous growth in my learner's skills in just this one year of working with her. She's so bright and inquisitive but also, she puts the effort in, and the reward is the wonderful results. I'm not her

first tutor in this program and I'm certain that she has grown and developed continually since beginning her classes at Spring Garden Road over the last few years. Indeed she credits the program in general with helping her gain valuable confidence and move beyond the shyness she experienced as a young student in high school.

The training that I have received thus far is beyond the pale in terms of quality and quantity. I have joined the Literacy Nova Scotia (pilot) on-line program, tutor practioner program, and have worked through the various modules. This is one well thought out training program! The teachers and resources I have been exposed to have been so beneficial to me as a tutor and also challenged me to explore all kinds of new notions and concepts. The focus is on being equipped to tutor learners of various levels - and through the journey I'm learning all kinds of things about myself. The experience of sharing ideas and learning with the other participants has been really motivating and totally fun. It's a very high quality program and I recommend that any new (or old) tutor take it. Share what you know and learn from others. The on-line nature of it should not intimidate anyone because the facilitators, other participants, IT support and teacher are always only an email or phone call away.

Being part of the Halifax Community Learning Network has brought much richness to my whole life. I know that I am very privileged to be associated with such wonderful people. Thanks to everyone for all your support and encouragement! Being a tutor rocks!

The Fireside Kitchen

By Sarah Holesworth

My name is Sarah and I work in the Fireside kitchen. I have worked there for five years and seven months. The Fireside kitchen is a place where we bake a lot of yummy food.

The kitchen employs people with intellectual disabilities. I feel right at home working there. The bosses are very understanding and they taught me a lot. I have learned how to bake a variety of things such as: muffins, loaves, squares, cakes, cinnamon rolls and tea biscuits. My favorite things to bake are loaves and muffins because they are easy and straight forward to make. One of the

things I would love to learn to make is bread because I have never made bread before.

One of the clients who I work with happens to be one of my best friends. Her name is Marilyn. In the kitchen we call her the Oatcake Queen because she makes the oatcake cookies and the best ones ever. Every day we work side by side and we like to joke and clown around sometimes.



Jane and Sarah working together at the Spring Garden Road Library

The Fireside Kitchen is a part of Prescott Group. If you are interested in buying baked products, you can go on line and order from the catalogue or you can call to place your order by phone.

The website address is : www.Prescottgroup.ca/fireside

If I Won a Million Dollars...

By Violet Drummond

If I won a million dollars, I would pay off all my bills, invest in some stocks, give my family some and bank some. I would probably go on a trip somewhere like Calgary to visit my brother and nephew.

You know it would be hard for me to believe that I could win that much money! It would be a dream come true if that were to happen to me, or anyone else.



Violet and her tutor Sarah at the Spring Garden Road Library

Leaves and Wind

By Heather Kinkaid

The wind and leaves were blowing,
Also how the wind did howl.
And the leaves dance with the wind,
I watch the leaves blow.



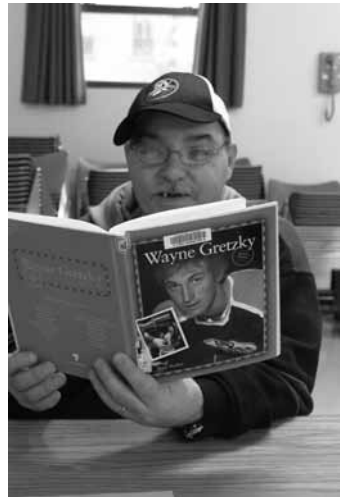
Heather hard at work at the Kesben Goodman Library

Tyrone's Courage at Curling

By Ronnie Holesworth

My friend Tyrone has been curling with us for about 4 or 5 years now with the Special Olympics. He has been curling great at Mayflower Curling Club. He was asked by our sister in law to help open the games for the curlers at the Brier. He was so happy to help out with this great event. He did a great job by throwing the first rock down the ice.

Tyrone gives his best abilities in his job as a skip. He works hard to let the other curlers know where to put the rocks in the right place. He puts his hand up and he shows us where he wants the rocks to go so he does a great job. Tyrone focuses well when he is skipping for our team. He really likes curling a lot. The Coaches are very happy to see how well he does as a skip. He shows great courage when curling at Mayflower Curling Club .



Ronnie learning about Wayne Gretzky at the Spring Garden Road Library

He was so happy to help open the games for the curlers who were going to play at the Metro Center.

Haiti

By Melita Jackson

On January 12, 2010 Haiti was struck with the worst earthquake ever . It made me feel very sad. I couldn't turn on the TV.

If I had my own way and won some money, I would adopt a family. And move them here to Halifax, Nova Scotia. I would build an apartment building for refugees with a cafeteria. I think it is so hot an earthquake will happen again. They should move the people somewhere else. Canada should move fast if nothing is done it will cause war and violence.

There are hundreds of people that have very little shelter. When I lived in Montreal most of my friends were from Haiti. Now I know why there are so many Haitians in Montreal. I think they are very nice people. I hope in the future things will be better for their people.

We are so lucky here in Canada, because it is so much bigger then Haiti. Haiti is the same size as Nova Scotia but has more than 7 million people living there. I don't think some people realize that. It really surprised me. I am so thankful to God that I am Canadian .

My Inspiration

By William Joseph Poirier

My inspiration for going on with my life was my father Pascal. He was a good father and friend. The one thing I know about my father he loved his family. He was there for me through hard times and the good times. My dad was very helpful to the community. He made wooden cars for the poor children of the world. My dad changed the way I look at life. He turned me into the young gentlemen I am today. My dad and I both had a love for woodworking. My dad always said when I die, continue on with your life. He wanted me to not worry about him. I know he is looking down



Billy and his tutor Jason at the Halifax North Library

upon me with a smile saying good job son.

Jamie's Story

By Jamie Loomis

My name is Jamie Loomis. I am from Halifax. I want to go to Australia because I like it. I went to the Pink Floyd show. The show was inside the Halifax Metro Centre.

I like the Montreal Canadiens. I like to use the computer. My favourite game is X-Men.

Sewing Class

By Jean Dignard

I started sewing classes in January at the Salvation Army Resource Center in Spryfield.

At first, we learned how to sew a straight line. The first project I made was a table napkin. We worked on simple items in the beginning and later larger ones. I have made curtains for my kitchen, bedroom, and living room windows.

I enjoy the classes and the other students are very nice. There are seven students and one instructor.



Jean celebrates the end of a year of learning at the Captain William Spry Library

My Accident

By Dongie Jamieson

I was hit by a car when I was 12 years old. I was in the children's hospital for months and months. I don't know how many months in total. In the hospital, I was in traction with one pin in my arm and two pins in my legs. My legs were up in the air. The pins were to hold my arm and legs together.

I was in a body cast when they took me out of traction. When they were

putting the body cast on the nurses would wake me up every five minutes to turn me over so the cast could dry. After the body cast I went home for a while but went back to the hospital because I had Spinal Meningitis. I now have a scar from my ear to my other ear. The surgery was done by Dr. Howes, who is now retired.

I went to visit the hospital to see if any old nurses were working there. Both units are now on the seventh floor of the new building of the hospital. Before, they were on Five South and Five West at the old children's hospital. The building brought back bad memories.

Spring

By Evangeline Brown

Spring is a beautiful time of year. The flowers bloom and the birds sing. People are hustling and bustling around- swimming, picnicking, barbecuing and having fun with the kids.

It is a very short time but everyone has a good time doing what they want to do. They can go for a walk in the park, go to the Public Gardens, go down to Peggy's Cove and other things that people like to do.

It is my favourite season of the year.

A Visit With Pat

By Kathy Dobson

On Wednesday morning I went to Upgrading at the library. When it was over I went outside and Pat was waiting in her car across the street. Pat used to be my tutor and she was visiting from Ottawa. I got in the car and we went to the Halifax Shopping Centre. Pat parked the car and we went inside. We went upstairs to get something to eat.



Kathy and her tutor Carolyn working together at the Halifax North Library

Then we went to a place called Naturalizer and I got a pair of boots. The boots are black with Velcro. Next we went to Sears and I got a red jacket with a nice hood. After that we got back in the car and took my things out of the back. I waved goodbye to Pat and went inside to my apartment. It was very nice to see Pat again.

How Far I Have Come...

By Margaret

I enjoy reading and writing now. I can't believe how far I've come since I first started. When I first started I was very nervous and afraid of learning to do things with someone else. I did it because I had to do my household things and I didn't know how to read or write things. Once I started to learn I enjoyed it and now I look forward to coming each week. I learned to read emails from my family and friends. I like getting pictures of my grandkids. I like to read the stories that I get in my email.

I read the Readers Digest now. I like the recipes and all the different topics and the stories that make me laugh. I read books from the library but I bought some books to read too. That is something I wouldn't do before.

I like to write my grocery list now to help me remember what I need to buy when I go shopping. Before I would try to remember what I needed in my head. I make a to do list to remind me so I don't forget things. I write things for the kids to do on craft days.

I have learned how to use my computer. Now I can read my emails and I can do my daycare accounts and my schedules for daycare. I learned how to use the Internet to find out what was playing at the Metro Center and to find the stores to find things for the kids. I use the computer to learn with my tutor. I have learned how to go on to web sites. I learn new things and I practice and play games. I like to do puzzles on the computer too.

I can't believe how much I learned in the time that I spent with my tutor.

My New Country

By Paul Ochalla

When I came to Canada I was speaking English but I was having a problem with reading, spelling and sentences. These are things I have a problem with. But what I didn't know is that I have a learning disability. That was a problem because in Africa people don't know about this. When you have a disability they will think some one who doesn't talk. That is what they believe. They don't know learning disabilities because they have a poor system of education and health. That is the problem I have today, but now I am getting the help from the library.

I wish I had more time at the library but now I can read and write. I came a long way. Everyone was wow! We can't believe this man can read and write. Spell Read helped me a lot. Thanks for the Department of Community Services that sent me to Spell Read. The manager of Spell Read is Sarah. She is a wonderful woman that believes every human will learn. I learned a lot at Spell Read. If they give me more time I think every thing will be okay. Now I feel good for myself. I can read and write but I still have some problems and that is why I still come to the library for help.

The Beauty of the Harmony of Birds

By Vicky Eisonor

As the sun rises at dawn
The birds come out and sing a new song.
Robins sing, chickadees sing,
"Chick-a-dee-dee-dee",
And other birds too,
Over the sky so blue.



*Taking a break from learning at Halifax
North*

Canada's Olympic Win

By Darlene Coulstring

The game was played between the U S A and Canada. They played three twenty minute periods. The first period there was no score.

The Canadians scored the first goal. It came from Ryan Getzlof. The second

goal came six minutes in the period. It was scored by Duncan Keith. The score stayed the same until the end of the period.

Ryan Kesler scored in the third period and then Zach Parise tied the game at 2-2 in the last minute of the period.

They had to play an overtime period and in the overtime period Sidney Crosby scored the winning goal the score was 3-2 for Canada.

My Three Wishes

By Anonymous

Before I went to the upgrading program I was good at fixing things, and hid my learning problem very well. My job at the time was fixing and refinishing furniture. One of my bosses and a coordinator talked me into trying out the upgrading program for a while. So I did, and I was nervous at first, but I got over it. Now I've got some confidence to ask for help.

I found a teapot and rubbed it, and a genie came out and gave me three wishes. I wished for my kids to have a good life, and see me more often. When I get older, I hope my kids will live nearby and visit often and be there when I need them. My third wish is to own my own antique business and teach people how to strip and refinish furniture. I am still waiting for that genie to come back and grant my wishes :)

My Christmases With My Family

By Kenneth McDow

In the Christmas of 1963, David was 6 months old and we were living with my in-laws. My Mother-in-law Millie did all the cooking and Bonnie helped Millie in the kitchen. We bought lots of gifts for David and Millie bought gifts for David too. That Christmas was a good one for me and my in-laws.

I lived in Herring Cove for 4 years. I played hockey with the boys in the parking lot in the daytime. I took David and the family everywhere I went with my van in town and we had a good time.

In 1970, we lived in Tantallon. I wasn't home for a week because I was working 75 hours on snow clearing at the hospital. So Christmas was late that year. The kids were 11 and 12 year old that Christmas .

The school had concerts at Christmas. The kids sang carols in the show.

At parent teacher meetings, the teachers said the kids were doing fine.

On payday Bonnie didn't cook we went to the mall and had pizza.

When I was living on Thornhill Drive the kids were teenagers. I just gave them the money then for Christmas and the kids got to buy their own gifts for Christmas. Bonnie did all the Christmas decorating and the cooking and I helped Bonnie with the Christmas shopping. Anna had a boyfriend who would come to see her and had nowhere to stay so he moved in with us. Tony was working and Terry stayed home. Anna was looking for a job in Halifax but there was no job for her in Halifax.

Anna and her boyfriend David moved to Ottawa for a job. My David was living at home and working at the Keg Restaurant and going to university at St. Mary's.

Now my children are married with their own families. They have Christmas at there home with their children. Terry and I have Christmas with my son Tony at their home and with my grandchildren and we have dinner with them. Afterwards, we go home to my place but we had a good time with my son Tony and my grandchildren.



Ken and his tutor Cathy learning together at the Kesben Goodman Library

Ronda's Learning Story

By Ronda Moulton

I went to a country school in Antigonish County from September, 1952 until June 1963. When I finished I was 16 years old and in grade two. I could not read or write. I went to work at a restaurant in Antigonish cooking Colonel Saunders's Kentucky Fried Chicken. I worked there for 1½ years and then I quit and went to sea on a ship where I worked as third cook. I got the vegetables ready and cooked them. I also helped cook fish and meat and sauces. As well I served meals and cleaned up; I helped take supplies aboard and put them away.



Ronda and her tutor Margaret celebrating at the Halifax North Library Christmas Party

I worked at this job for many years until I had an arthritic attack, which took me off my feet. I was in the hospital in Antigonish for 8 weeks. When I got out my doctor continued to treat me and sent me to a specialist in Halifax. I was unable to work for two years, but then I got a job driving a taxi for one year. I was lucky that I had a driver's license. When I was 16, my mother had helped me by reading the questions and the answers from the test booklet many times until I could remember them. I got my license by passing an oral test and the driver's test.

After that I went to the Yukon where I got a job cooking at a truck stop at Watson Lake on the main road to Whitehorse, Dawson City and Alaska. I stayed there for 1½ years and then came home to Nova Scotia.

While I was home I took a barber's course in Pictou and got a barber's Certificate. After that I got a part-time job for the winter working at a barber shop in Antigonish. In the spring I went to the Northwest Territories and worked in a barbershop for several years. During that time, circumstances in my life changed and I returned to Nova Scotia to live in Halifax. I decided then that I had to learn to read and write.

For the past 1½ years I have been working with a tutor from the Halifax Community Learning Network at the North Branch Library. I have been learning to read newspapers and books, like history books of Nova Scotia and cookbooks. Cooking is easier now because I can look up recipes and write them down. I can make lists, write notes and cards and stories about myself. I can also use the computer. I feel good that I can read and write. My tutor thinks that I am doing very well. I appreciate her hard work and the time she spends helping me to read and write. After all these years, I know that I can learn. I am not a dummy!

Newcomer to Nova Scotia

By Margaret Naboi

I came to Halifax from Kenya on November 25, 1998. When I came here it was only my husband who spoke English. I could speak Arabic and a few other languages. It was hard to be here without speaking English. I only spoke to my own people in Arabic.



*Margaret and her tutor Mandy at the Halifax
North Library*

It was hard to find my way around and even to find the bus was hard because I couldn't read the route numbers. I was having a hard time to speak to people or to find things like Canadian food to eat because I was not used to eating frozen food. My hardest things about learning English were writing and reading.

Now I know how to write and read a book and I am learning to do math. I am learning these skills at the Cunard Learning Centre. I also learn because I try hard to help myself and I like to talk to people and ask questions. Now I am proud of myself because I had never gone to school before. I hope to get my high school diploma and sometimes I think I may be too old for school, but I know I can do it. I compare myself to the way I was when I came to Canada and it has made a difference.

The MS St. Louis

By Barb Pottier

As I looked over the notes and pictures of our trip to the Museum of the Atlantic this winter, my heart went cold, colder than the air outside on this January morning.

As my teacher and I were in class one Thursday morning we came across an article, “Immigration Lessons from the spirit of the St. Louis”. We read the article and had a lot more questions than answers. In this article we found out the museum was having the seventieth anniversary of the ill-fated voyage of Jewish refugees. We had a lot of questions. “Why in Halifax? Why our museum?” So the following Thursday, we met at the museum to see if we could get our questions answered.



Barb and her tutor Avril celebrate the end of a year of learning at the Captain William Spry Library

At 9:30 am the doors opened. The displays of all our maritime history and more. My eyes and mind were all over the place, but we were here for one reason and at the far end of the museum we found what we were looking for. We found the letters and telegrams of the people asking the government to allow these refugees to have a safe home in Canada and the Canadian government’s replies explaining why we could not take the nine hundred and seven Jewish immigrants on the Steam Ship Saint Louis into Canada and into our own port of Halifax. So much hope and so much pain, on this beautiful steam ship. We saw the model of the M.S. Saint Louis in all its beauty.

We read and viewed all the letters. The heart-rending pictures of Jewish children behind bars in Nazi death camps; bodies in a large hole in the ground. No Names! No dignity! Just tattoo numbers on their arms.

We also found the map showing the path of the Saint Louis carrying the 907

Jewish immigrants heading to Cuba, in 1939. Thinking with visas in hand, that they could stay in Cuba and later move on to the U.S. But Cuba changed its regulations and refused entry to these Jewish refugees.

The captain of the St. Louis, Captain Shroeder, was a good man who wanted to help the people. When Cuba would not accept them he stayed at sea, hoping someone would help! Halifax would have been the closest port at one point. Since the St. Louis came to Halifax regularly in the 1930's, as a luxury steam ship, Pier 21 was used to handling immigration at this port. It was comforting to read that the Halifax Chronicle Herald edition supported accepting the refugees.

Prime Minister Mackenzie King heard of the St. Louis situation. He was emphatically opposed to the admission of the St. Louis passengers. Also the Immigration Minister, Frederick Blair, stated that these refugees did not qualify under Canadian immigration law. "None is too many," said Blair. "How Sad!"

The United States sent out a gun ship to watch that the St. Louis did not enter American waters. With no other option the St. Louis had to go back to Europe. Of the 907 refugees 255 died in the Nazi death camps!

These 255 refugees will always be in my thoughts, every time I go down to the Halifax waterfront, or just sit by the Atlantic Ocean. "We could have done something" but "We did nothing." Lost Souls let us never forget.

Learning with Paul

By Kevin McDonald

I have been taught spelling, reading, writing and math for about a year and a half. I have read several books. I'm reading Star Trek Voyager - The Farther Shore, it is a good book. I'm learning to write essays for the first time. I'm doing very good in math. I have been doing fractions. I like doing them and I just started decimals.

I would like to thank Linda Oakley and Paul Chaddock for all the help they give me. If it was not for them I would not be here in this program, thanks.

Writing Workshop With Jenni Blackmore

By Kathy Dobson

I went to a Writing Workshop at the library. I wrote a few stories and then we had a coffee break with snacks. Then we worked on some more stories and soon it was lunchtime. We had three kinds of pizza. Jenni gave us some ideas for stories. One was about superstitions and another one was about animals. They put our names in a box and I made the first draw and the slip I drew had my own name. I had a choice of a hat or a T-shirt. I picked the hat. When it was over I took the bus home. It was a nice time.

Horses

By Margaret LeBlanc

I rode a horse when I was going to school, but he bent down to use the bathroom. I was scared and never rode a horse again, but I still like to read about horses.



Enjoying the Volunteer Week Party at the Captain William Spry Library

My Favourite Place

By Mary Thompson

My favourite place in the world is River John, Nova Scotia.

I first went there when I was a teenager. My Uncle Seward and his family took me in the truck. We travelled down a bumpy, gravel road. There was lots of ocean scenery. We passed farms and fields. The colours were beautiful. There were lots of greens and blues. Purple flowers sparkled in the sunlight. We were excited.

Aunt Edie met us at the door. I went with my cousins to the river to swim. We took a shortcut over the train tracks that crossed above the river. I was very scared! I never took that shortcut again.

We had lots of fun and family barbecues. I stayed in River John for three years at my Uncle John's. Every day we went to school on the school bus. It was crowded and noisy. One day I missed the bus. Aunt Bernice had to come to pick me up. After school we had to clean the hen house before heading out to play with my cousins.

In the winter the river froze and Uncle Percy could drive on the ice. Winter was a very quiet time in River John.

In the summer we spent most of the time at the beach. I was tanned brown every summer.

River John was fun in every season.

A Story About My Cats

By Heather Myatt

I am a cat lover. I love them so much that I have two of them. My cats names are Taz and Gaz. My cats are very nice to me. To give you an example, Taz always comes to my bed and cuddles with me. Taz likes to be petted when I pick her up and she purrs. She's very playful and has a funny meow. She's very happy when I give her food.

Gaz comes into my room and sleeps on the carpet beside the bed. Both of my cats are playful but Taz is a little bit more playful than Gaz. Gaz does not like to be picked up and she gets mad when I do. She licks Taz's face but then starts a fight with her. She bothers me at the dinner table when I'm eating my supper. She's very moody. She lets me know when she wants to be petted by coming to me with her back up. Gaz likes to purr when I pet her but not as much as Taz.

I have had my cats since June of last year. I was at camp and when I came home there were two cats. I was happy and excited and surprised. It's been wonderful ever since.



Heather enjoying the Christmas party at the Kesben Goodman Library

Say No To Gambling

By Jacqueline Emmerson

I hate gambling!
It takes lots of money and
When you leave, you are broke.
Gambling makes you lose your
Job –
Gambling makes you lose your
Friends –
Gambling makes you lose your
Family –
Gambling makes you lose you
Self esteem –
Gambling is ADDICTIVE –
Say NO TO GAMBLING!!

My Story

By Adnan Haider

On a daily basis I usually sit on my computer to play games and practice my typing. I have been keeping up with my old routine, practicing old math problems, reading, and spelling. My sisters are busy with their school work and I get very lonely at home. Before I used to think that school was too hard and I did not want to become smart, but now I understand that education is important because it makes you more independent.



Adnan and his tutor Reg at the Kesben Goodman Library

When I was in high school I was learning lots of new things and keeping myself busy, but here in Halifax I cannot go to a school and so I am stuck at home. I would like the opportunity to attend a college program so that I can learn more like my sisters. I get very bored sitting at home because I feel like I am wasting my life by doing nothing. I like to be in a school setting where I can meet new people and learn new things.

Sometimes I get frustrated when I do not understand something because it is too hard, but I have learned that working hard is good to build up your skills. I want to become more independent even though I am handicapped because I know that my family will not stay with me forever. I think by going to school and learning new things I can become smart and help myself become more independent. I would like the library to help me gain the experience I need to become more independent.

Christmas Eve

By Linda MacLellan

On Christmas Eve I looked out the window and saw Susan playing in the snow. I went out and joined her. We made a snowman. I reached in my pocket and took out some glitter. I held the glitter in my hands and threw it on the snowman. The snowman came to life.

We ran over the snow bank. We saw the snowman run into the house. We ran to the window of the house. We saw the snowman opening up our gifts! We hollered, "Mom, mom, the snowman is opening our gifts!". Then our mom came out of the room and chased the snowman out with a vacuum cleaner!

Susan and I went back into the house and mother already had our gifts put in a garbage bag ready to wrap again.

We went to bed and when we woke up in the morning, the gifts were wrapped under the tree that we got from Santa.

Get out the mistletoe
Take out the silver bells
Hang the garland high and low.
With the help of busy elves
decorate the home,
hang the stockings from the shelves,
clean out the fireplace
because Santa is coming tonight.

The People of Canada and their Families

By Kenneth McDow

Some Canadian families have a hard time bringing up their families and some families with more education have an easier time.

Some people work really hard but still have difficult times making enough money. They send their children to school to get a better education so life will be easier for them.

A good job means they can pay their bills and still have more money for extra things like a new car for example and their children can have a good home and have a good Christmas in their new home, and the children's friends can come over to their new home and have a good time.

The grandparents can come to see the grandchildren in the summer months and at Christmas time and look at the Christmas tree. Then the children can open their gifts in front of their parents and grandparents on Christmas morning and have Christmas dinner, and watch the children play with their gifts.

The grandparents can go home to their own place and they had a good time at their son's new home and at Christmas with their families.

And so you can see more education can help you get a better job. If you stay in school when you are young, the job you get is better to help your families when you are grown up.

My Easter Weekend

By Heather Rumsey

Traditionally on Easter weekend me and my Aunt Shirley and my Aunt's friend Barb go to a movie and then we go out to dinner.

This year I did something different. I started my morning with a shower and later a cup of coffee. Later in the morning I ate breakfast then I relaxed and watched a bit of television.

At around 3:15 pm my sister picked me up and then we went and picked up Aunt Shirley. In the afternoon we had a nice Easter dinner with all the fixings. The dinner was absolutely wonderful. We ended Easter dinner with chocolate cheesecake. Later that evening we left Aunt Paula's and Uncle Henry's and I stayed over my Aunt Shirley's. While I was home I watched T.V. then I went to sleep and Aunt Shirley went later. In the morning I went home.



Heather and Wendy working on the computer at the Spring Garden Road Library

Percy's Unexpected Adventure

By Percy Oliver

It was Christmas 2008 and I was thinking about my son Percy J. I was living in Halifax, but he was on his own in New Brunswick so I decided to get into my car and surprise him with a visit.

My story really begins when I started to drive home again after our visit. Highway 102 can take you to two places – the place I wanted to go, or Quebec.

Luckily I had a full tank of gas because by the time I saw city lights I had been driving for hours. I knew that something was not right, so when I saw some people on the sidewalk I stopped the car to ask them where I was. When they answered me, I was shocked. I was not in Halifax or even Nova Scotia. I was in Quebec. To make a long story short, what should have been an afternoon drive took almost three days!



Percy and his tutor Sandra at the Halifax North Library

My advice to anyone going on a trip with a GPS machine is to pay attention

to it. Unlike me, you might get home on time.

Learning Together

By Pat Robinson

This is my second year as a tutor at Keshen Goodman Library. I work with a lovely lady, and we've become friends. We work for a while on Friday afternoons, and then have tea and chat about whatever strikes our fancy. I had no idea when I first volunteered that this would be the case.



The two Pats enjoying the door prizes at the Keshen Goodman Christmas Party

My experience in teaching has been at a university level, and I knew from the outset that many of the techniques I had used in the past would be inappropriate in tutoring. Fortunately, there has been no end of help coming from HCLN and Literacy Nova Scotia. I found out that I could sign up for workshops and seminars, some of which took a few hours of an evening, or perhaps a Saturday for a workshop. At these meetings, I could listen to and ask questions of practitioners with far more experience and expertise than I have. More times than I can count, I found myself putting into practice with my learner the techniques I'd heard about just a day or two earlier at a workshop. Many times, these professional development opportunities provided me with answers to questions I didn't even know I needed to ask.

During the winter and spring of this year, I've been participating in a tutor-training pilot program through Literacy Nova Scotia. We meet online (and a few times face to face) and discuss ways to present reading, writing, spelling, math and communication material to a variety of learners. Since those of us in the pilot program are located all over the province, we get together at the LNS eCampus. Our readings and assignments have provided me with food for thought to last for many years. No doubt this program will be useful to many practitioners when LNS gets it fine-tuned and ready to present to the community.

My feeling now when I meet my learner for a session is that I have all of HCLN and LNS backing me up. My tool kit has grown and grown. It's hard for me to believe that when I started, I didn't know what a number line was, or that there was a difference between reading for comprehension and reading for vocabulary practice. I used to think my tool kit would fit in a conference bag, but now I think I'd have trouble shoving it all into my car. Having such a lot of workable solutions at my disposal lets me focus right here and now on how my friend is doing today.

Jane's Story

By Jane Landry

It all took place after a hard time. I was dancing on stage doing the Virginia Reel when someone called the center and said there was a bomb in the building. Everybody just went everywhere. Mom, my sister, and I left the building as fast as possible.



Jane and Phoebe learning together at the Spring Garden Road Library

The next day Mom said, "I refuse to let you go to dancing. I am worried about you." Well, I was coming home from school when I met up with Anne my friend, who said, "Cheer up. Mrs. MacGillvary is giving art lessons for \$1.00 at her house downstairs in her basement." So, I signed up. That's when I met Mrs. MacGillvary. Every Friday you would find me down in the basement from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm painting.

One day I took sick. I had to go to the hospital. I was sick for years and years. I met a new doctor and he said he was going to change my medication. Well, it works and I am feeling much better now. Then, I started painting again. And now I am in school trying to get my grade twelve or my GED. Now, I am back to painting and I love it and I love school too.

My Curling Team

By Ronnie Holesworth

We got started curling four years ago at Mayflower Curling Club on Young Street in Halifax. We like curling there because Dave and John are great people to know. Dave is the boss who runs the curling club. He has one hard job to do and he is a real nice guy to let us use the ice. John is the guy who sits at the desk, he puts names up for people who are coming in for Tournaments. He's a real nice guy to talk with at Mayflower.

We curl there every Monday and we have curling next year so if anyone would like to curl with us they have to get in touch with Pam Sandford who is the curling coach for Mayflower. Kim and her daughter Shelby are also our coaches. They show up to help out on the ice and so does Sharon. They are very great coaches and we think they do a great job with us all when they coach.

Sarah is one of our skips on the ice as well for Special Olympics. Sarah used to be a figure skater for Special Olympics a long time ago and she won medals for winning competitions. Julie is a curler too with Special Olympics. She is one of our skips on the ice and she also shows us where to curl the rock. We have two or three sweepers who sweep the rocks for us. Gary was asked to help out with opening of the Brier at Mayflower Curling Club. He did a real great job helping out with the coaches, it took three people to help open the games. Gary has been in the Special Olympics for a very long time and he also does golf with us. He is a very great guy to know in the Special Olympics.

We really have a great team in the Special Olympics where every one has fun!

Dear Chicago Black Hawks

By Robert Lowe

I would like to come up to watch you play.
I started to play hockey when I was 11 years old.
I am still playing goal tending.
We won over the coaches by 7-6 on Tuesday.
My name is Robert Lowe. I'm 51 years old.

How is your team doing in hockey?

I hope you guys do well this season.

I hope you guys win the Stanley Cup this year.

I was on the Chicago Black Hawks floor hockey team up in Truro, Nova Scotia in 1976.

I take reading and writing to get my reading skills back. I like it there with the people I come with.

I'm your favorite fan.

I play goaltender for the Special Olympics ringette hockey team and we beat the Old Timers last year

13-5.

I would like to hear from you guys.

Please write soon.

P.S. I got a Stanley Cup with a Chicago crest on it.

If you guys don't win, you can have it.

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