



TUTOR TALK NEWSLETTER

MARS/AVRIL 2007

NEWS

Health Literacy — a growing problem...

The link between literacy and health is one that needs to be documented and studied more in the hopes to improve the quality of life of those who have low-literacy skills. The correlation between low literacy and health is very important and is shown in the table below, created by the Canadian Health Network*.

Direct effects on health	Indirect effects on health
<p>People limited in literacy may find it difficult to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and use health information such as advice on self-care, instructions for medications, food labels, and safety warnings • Access services which support their health • Find their way through a complicated health care system • Interact with health care providers • Seek appropriate and timely medical attention. Although some people limited in literacy use health services more frequently, many often wait to seek medical help until the health problem reaches a crisis state. 	<p>People limited in literacy are likely to live in poverty, and may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack access to a secure food supply • Live in low quality housing • Work in unsafe environments • Experience isolation and social exclusion • Encounter high stress in daily living and suffer from low self-esteem • Have more obstacles to healthy practices such as being active, healthy eating and not smoking. • Face barriers to fostering healthy development during the growing years.

Health literacy is a subject that should be discussed and recognized by all literacy programs. *Words for Women* is a good example of a small program that could have a big impact on the health literacy of women. Through discussions with various tutors in the program it is clear that health literacy is a concern for a number of our learners. For example, one learner expressed a concern about not understanding the medication that her daughter was taking, and a number of others expressed the desire to be able to communicate better with their doctors. The link between community organizations and the health system is clear, but there is still insufficient information passed between the two. More communication and promotion of improving health literacy would help in reaching people and showing them that this is a problem, and that there are solutions.

*More information can be found on their website at:

<http://www.canadian-health-network.ca/servlet/ContentServer?cid=1059684393879&pagename=CHN-RCS/CHNResource/CHNResourcePageTemplate&c=CHNResource&lang=En>

Another interesting site:

http://www.nationalreviewofmedicine.com/issue/2007/04_15/4_patients_practice07_7.html



1000 PEACE WOMEN EXHIBITION INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2007

On March 8, 2007 the YWCA of Montreal hosted an exhibition of 1000 Peace Women for International Women's Day. 1000 Peace Women Across the Globe is an exhibition realized by 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize campaign of 2005. The exhibition consists of 1000 cards with the images and biographies of the women nominated for for the prize based on their diverse ways of promoting and building peace-related projects.



MESSAGE FROM THE LITERACY CENTRE

Why Progress Reports?

You might wonder why *Words for Women* reminds you so often to send in your *progress reports*. These progress reports are very important for us, for yourself, for your learner, and for the success of the program.

Firstly, progress reports help you reflect on your tutoring progress with your learner. It is a moment to discuss with your learner what the results of your tutoring sessions are - has she learnt something in the last two months? If yes, you can identify what was

learnt and celebrate her progress together! On the other hand, if you feel that you are not getting anywhere and your learner is under the impression that she is not learning anything - don't panic! We can discuss your strategy with you and help you come up with alternative means as well as evaluate the pertinence of the objectives that you are working on. Communicate with us, we are here to help!

Another important reason to fill out your progress report is to diffuse the success of the learners to others. The best way to communicate what *Words for Women* does with funders and with our community and institutional partners is to name what the learners have learned and the objectives that were attained with your help. These concrete examples show that *Words for Women* is effectively improving the literacy skills of the women in the program. It shows that seemingly small steps are useful in the learner's daily life. The progress reports tell the story of learners and show us an increase in their confidence and self-esteem with regards to writing a cheque, to finding her way in the metro or her neighbourhood. These small successes are to be celebrated!

STORY-WRITING WORKSHOP

Martine Dupont from the Boîte-à-lettre (Bal) presented a workshop on Personal Story Writing. She presented how to help someone with low literacy skills write their own personal story with regards to their relationship with reading and writing. She has successfully led a number of youth to help understand where their reading and writing problems stem from. The story-writing technique is one that can be transferred to the learners at Words for Women. These stories can cover any topic, not just reading and writing. For more information, please visit the YWCA Literacy Library to consult the reference material.

Don't forget we can always use pieces written by tutors AND their learners for the newsletter!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tutor Workshop:

May 14th at 5:30PM

We will be holding an English Story-Writing Workshop.

Please contact Chelsea Kirkby at 514-866-9941 ext. 278

Free Books!

The Literacy Center at the YWCA has books to give away. Next time you are at the Center, look for the boxes with "Please Take!" written on them and help yourselves. There are children's books (great for your learner's children!) as well as novels and a couple of resource books.

TUTOR TALK by Joan McConnell

At my first interview with a prospective learner I was more of a witness than an interviewer. Chelsea, the Resource Person at Words for Women led the interview, but it was still a lot of fun. It was only supposed to last an hour, but had it been up to me, it would have lasted half day. It was so interesting to talk to an extremely motivated and enthusiastic learner.

I was very fortunate during this first interview since the learner had no trouble explaining her background and why she wanted to learn. She answered all of our curious questions very willingly and was not at all self-conscious about her reading limitations. She was proud of what she had learned so far in Canada and was excited about the opportunity we were giving her.

All through the interview, I was thinking and hoping that we would be able to meet her expectations. The conversation just flowed...then Chelsea said...we must fill out the form!!! I thought to myself...oh dear! I'm going off track, but when we started going down the form, I realized that we had answered most of the questions about her background and current living and learning situation. It was also quite amazing how Victoria just voluntarily showed read and wrote for us, even though she was at a very basic level. She demonstrated her current skills very graciously and emphasized that she really wanted to learn for herself and her four children's sake. She knew that she had good opportunities ahead of her and knew that she was a quick learner if she had the proper tools to learn.

I realize that all interviews will not go this smoothly. It was the kind of interviews you see in videos to demonstrate how interviews should go. I was very fortunate to have this learner as my first interviewee.



PAROLES DE FEMMES
WORDS FOR WOMEN



1000 Peace Women
Exhibition and Testimonials
International Women's Day
March 8, 2007



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Thank you very much to all those who attended the event!