

Salt Spring
Community literacy
Action plan
(including goals and success statements)

September 2007

After completing a Community Profile, an Inventory of Literacy Programs and Resources currently available on Salt Spring Island, and extensive interviews with community members, Salt Spring Literacy, with the support of the literacy planning task group, has developed a proposed plan of action to address the needs indicated by those efforts.

This is the first literacy plan for Salt Spring and, undoubtedly, will not be the last. Needs will change; new programs will be developed; new opportunities will arise; and, hopefully, we will all learn from the process. The plan is a fluid entity, subject to change and modification in response to the situation of the moment.

The plan includes three major goals with specific objectives under each. They are:

1. To provide centralized community services
2. To provide literacy services for adults
3. To support current early learning and family literacy work

Goal No. 1 is in direct response to the desires expressed during the initial community meeting in April. All of the information gathered for the Inventory has been posted on a website available to the entire community – www.saltspringlibrary.com/communityinfo/literacy. That's one objective accomplished. Other objectives are itemized in the Action Plan.

Goal No. 2 was also voiced at the April meeting, and the need for help was confirmed in the Inventory. Once out of school and working, there is virtually nothing in the way of literacy activities or training that does not require computer skills. Tutor training for thirteen volunteers to equip them for one-on-one, tutor-to-student, no charge sessions with adults in need of help has been scheduled for October.

Goal No. 3: Community Services, the library, our schools and alternative schools, as well as many day-care and early childhood services incorporate varying degrees of literacy training, and they are doing a good job of it. However, because both early learning and family literacy is so important, support and enhancement for those efforts remain as a continuing long term goal.

GOAL NO. 1
CENTRALIZE COMMUNITY LITERACY SERVICES

Objective No. 1:

**Provide a central place for gathering all literacy information,
accessible to the entire community.**

HOW: Post the Salt Spring Island Inventory of all Literacy Resources and Programs on a website, and provide printed copies of the list for those not familiar with computers.

**WHO: Salt Spring Literacy
Salt Spring Island Library
Community groups**

RESOURCES:

Assistance from the library in establishing a website.

Information from the community regarding literacy resources, including Salt Spring Literacy's email list of 70 supporters, both individuals and organizations.

Lots and lots of volunteer hours, not only to obtain current information, but also to keep the website current throughout the future with all changes as they occur.

Publicity for the website and the information so that the entire community knows what is available.

Printing and distribution of hard copies of the Inventory.

DATE: The Inventory was posted on the website in July 2007, and a volunteer will keep it current in the future. Publicity for the website and printing/distribution of hard copies is expected to occur by early September 2007.

**Success can be measured by use of the website
and the demand for printed copies.**

GOAL NO. 1
CENTRALIZE COMMUNITY LITERACY SERVICES

Objective No. 2

Firmly establish a strong literacy presence in the community as an available resource for assistance with literacy at all levels of competency.

HOW: Provide and maintain a specific physical location (an office) which may be reached via mail, phone, email, or walk-in. Publicize literacy efforts, capabilities, information, and help provided on a frequent and on-going schedule through all means possible.

WHO: Salt Spring Literacy

RESOURCES:

Rental space sufficient for Coordinator activities and, if possible, for tutor-student sessions. Location is critical as it must be accessible but discreet to encourage walk-ins. Minimal kitchen facilities desirable, but not mandatory. Coffee and a cookie encourage comfort and communication.

Equipment needed – at least one computer, a printer, phone, locked filing cabinet, desk, at least two chairs, internet service, answering machine, shelving for supplies and lesson materials, good lighting.

Coordinator. Need to prepare a job description, advertise the position, and interview applicants.

Volunteers to maintain a routine office schedule when the Coordinator is not available – for instance, open Tues, Thurs, Sat, from 10:00 til 1:00.

Publicity. There is no point in having an office if nobody knows you are there. Listings in phone book, perhaps paid ads in local paper, listing on our website, a sign on the door, and maybe a sandwich board outside.

Victoria Literacy Project assistance with set up, problems and procedures.

Funding anticipated from Salt Spring Foundation and Literacy Now.

DATE: January 2008 or as soon as funds to cover are in hand.

Success can be measured by number and quality of contacts, literacy problems solved, and local awareness in response to publicity.

GOAL NO. 1
CENTRALIZE COMMUNITY LITERACY SERVICES

Objective No. 3

**Establish a central place for solving emergency literacy problems
in the community with two way communication available to all.**

HOW: Use email and phone to receive inquiries and to respond. Compile and maintain a list of individuals with special talents who could help in emergencies – e.g., translators for non-English speaking hospital patients, home visitors for patients who need help with medical instructions, helpers for people who have trouble with government forms and regulations, ESL practice sessions for foreign students -- just about anything that the Inventory doesn't cover.

WHO: Salt Spring Literacy with cooperation from Emergency Services of all kinds, including disasters, fire, earthquake, epidemics, whatever, as well as community volunteers and providers of information.

RESOURCES:

Lots of volunteer hours to acquire a database of individuals with specific talents and to keep it current (a difficult chore as when people **are unable to participate for a variety of reasons**, they often don't think to pass on this information).

Some means of monitoring our communications so that urgent inquiries received after normal working hours could be handled promptly, no doubt, more volunteer hours.

Publicity -- always publicity. If people don't know the service is there, they won't use it.

Funding: Little or nothing in the way of equipment is required, and publicity would be at minimal expense, but anyone willing to serve on a 24 hour basis deserves some compensation. The volunteer hours acquiring a database and keeping it current are so huge, recompense should be offered. (You can't start with the phone book when you are looking for somebody who speaks Polish. You have to know your community and have a lot of connections and a lot of help.)

DATE: Undetermined. Largely dependent on acquiring volunteers and a database of information.

Success would be even one person helped through a crisis.

GOAL NO. 2

Services for adults

Objective No. 1:

Ensure that literacy help is available to adults in the community who need assistance with their literacy skills.

WHO: Salt Spring Literacy, Community Services, and Beacon Employment to identify and encourage this population to take advantage of the opportunity to improve their skills.

HOW: Provide volunteer tutors to work one-on-one with willing students to improve literacy skills at no charge to the student.

RESOURCES:

Trained tutors willing to volunteer for the task.

A network of discreet places for learning sessions. Possible rental or free space.

Means of evaluating the skill level of students when they enroll and at intervals thereafter.

On-going support, monitoring and trouble-shooting of the learning process.

Supply of written materials deemed to be of interest to the students and written at a learning level.

Coordinator for the project – paid or volunteer – this is a big job.

DATE: Beginning date November 1, 2007, and on-going. This is a long term project. Participation is expected to be minimal until some success can be demonstrated and potential students become aware of it.

**Success will be obtained with the first enrollment and some demonstrable progress for the individual.
If four or five students enroll in the first year, it will be a huge success.**

Goal no. 2
Services for adults

Objective No. 2:

Provide training for volunteers to equip them to handle individuals with low literacy levels in one-on-one learning sessions to improve their literacy skills.

HOW: Training sessions of approximately 5 hours each day for three consecutive Saturdays led by qualified instructors.

WHO: Instructors from Victoria Literacy Project
Community Volunteers

RESOURCES:

The qualified instructors.

\$1500 in funds for the instructors, plus expenses of roughly \$500

Appropriate venue for **training**.

Hospitality including luncheon, supplies, help with directions, and volunteers to provide a warm welcome.

DATE: Arrangements have been made for training thirteen volunteers on October 13, 20, and 27.

Success will be achieved when the instructors determine the volunteers are ready for students.

Services for adults

Objective 3:

Provide a means for working people with adequate literacy levels to maintain and hone their literacy skills in an informal environment enjoyable to them, and to demonstrate the unity of the community in support of them.

WHO: Salt Spring Literacy and volunteer leaders from the community

HOW: Provide no cost neighbour-to-neighbour sessions of no more than two hours each on a variety of topics pertaining to daily life led by a community member known to participants (not a professor, not a course). Suggested topics are “How to run your DVD/VCR player”, “Making your voice heard in community affairs”, “Dealing with the bank”, “When to compost and when to berm”, “Doing your own dog grooming”, “Repair and maintenance of decks”, etc.

RESOURCES:

Venue for sessions – rental or free space.

Publicity

SS Literacy volunteer to monitor sessions and assure venue is left in appropriate condition – clean, tidy, doors locked.

Volunteer to take reservations and determine if the demand exceeds the space.

A volunteer to solicit the leaders, arrange the space(s), and respond to reservations or queries.

DATE: Undetermined, but after January 2008. This objective is largely dependent on obtaining volunteers from the community.

Success can easily be determined by participation.

GOAL 3

EARLY LEARNING AND FAMILY LITERACY

Objective No. 1

**To ensure support and assistance
for the work being done by agencies
working in this important area.**

WHO: Various agencies providing early learning and family literacy assistance and Salt Spring Literacy.

HOW: This depends a great deal on the expressed needs and desires of the agencies involved. Possibilities include:

1. Funding LEAP training when it becomes available for one or two persons with the understanding that they will bring the knowledge home to share with others.

2. Purchase of books from the International Cross Cultural Exchange suitable for children 4 to 6 years of age, geared for reading aloud, family oriented, possibly accompanied by teaching tips, to be provided at no charge to those who might use them, classes, families, and/or library programs.

3. Organizing a roster of volunteers who would be willing to help youngsters in danger of falling behind.

RESOURCES:

Funding for training and/or book purchase.

Volunteers to establish and maintain a roster of volunteer “coaches” to help youth who have difficulty keeping up with class work. Meeting/work space would also be required.

DATE: Undetermined. Depends on funds and volunteers available. (One volunteer “coach” is available now and would like to work at Fernwood.)

**Success would be a child no longer at risk,
a family reading together and discussing a book,
the joy on a child’s face when he or she
enters another world through reading.**