HS-A1-1

Region of Peel
Working for you

REPORT
Regional Council

DATE: August 18, 2009

REPORT TITLE: **LITERACY MONTH IN PEEL**

FROM: Janet Menard, Commissioner of Human Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Regional Council proclaim September 2009 as Literacy Month in the Region of Peel;

And further, that members of Regional Council demonstrate their support for Literacy Month by participating in reading activities and events throughout Peel during the month of September.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- For over forty years, the United Nations International Literacy Day has been celebrated annually in September.
- Approximately nine million Canadian adults (or four in ten working age adults) score below the literacy level experts believe is necessary to cope effectively in society.
- The Human Services Department and their community partners are committed to promoting literacy within the Region of Peel.
- In September 2009 literacy and lifelong learning will be celebrated through various activities and events throughout Peel including the Brampton Festival of Learning, Caledon Pajama Night Read Together and the Mississauga Literacy Committee event.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

The United Nations International Literacy Day has been celebrated annually in September for over 40 years. The objective of this celebration is to emphasize the importance of literacy and to applaud the efforts made by literacy practitioners and volunteers.

Since 2005 Regional Council has approved the Human Services Department's request to proclaim September as Literacy Month in the Region of Peel. The month is used to showcase the wealth of literacy related programs and services offered throughout Peel.

In 2008, Regional Council members and staff demonstrated their support for Literacy Month in Peel by engaging with the community and participating in reading activities with children throughout Peel. This participation in initiatives which promote the growth and development of children further displays the ongoing endorsement of the Peel Children's Charter of Rights.

2. Research Findings

Research shows that Canada's literacy rate is below world standards. Approximately nine million adults, or four in ten working age adults, scored below the literacy level experts believe is necessary to cope effectively in society. Canadians with low proficiency in literacy tend to have higher rates of unemployment, work in occupations which require lower skill levels, and have lower earnings. Yet despite the challenges that individuals with low literacy levels face, less than five percent currently participate in literacy programs (Community Literacy of Ontario, 2007).

The Canadian Council on Learning predicts that based on demographic conditions, population growth and immigration patterns, Canada is expected to have more than 15 million people aged 16 or over (representing about 46 per cent of the population) with literacy skills below the internationally accepted standard required to cope in a modern society. The council believes that improving literacy is a joint responsibility among governments, employers, communities and individuals.

3. Literacy Resources in Peel

The Region of Peel Human Services Department and community partners support an array of free literacy programs for children and families, including the following:

a) The Family Literacy Program, which served 4589 families last year, is located in 72 schools across Peel and also has five neighbourhood based locations. The program is currently delivered in three additional languages (French, Mandarin, and Hindi) to meet the diverse needs of the community.

b) In 2008, the Early Literacy Specialists provided 668 hours delivering early literacy workshops to over 6000 parents and professionals in Peel.

c) In-depth literacy screening and referral services for social assistance recipients as well as dependent adults and spouses of Ontario Disability Support Program recipients are provided in partnership with the Peel-Halton-Dufferin Adult Learning Network.

d) Programs that are rich in language and literacy activities are delivered by the Ontario Early Years Centres and the Region of Peel Learn.Play.Care. Centres.

e) Multiple literacy based programs are delivered within the Knightsbridge community including Parent and Child Programs, Math Programs, and Summer Fun Programs. All programs are free, family centered, drop-in and welcoming for all to participate.

f) The Peel Adult Learning Centre, Peel District School Board, Le Collège du Savoir, Skills for Employment Life and Family (formally Peel Literacy Guild), and Sheridan College deliver literacy training. Over the past three years these institutions have provided over 295,989 hours of literacy training to approximately 2463 individuals in Peel.

g) Learning Earning and Parenting (LEAP) is a province-wide program aimed at young parents. The LEAP program has supported over 442 parents to complete their secondary school education, develop their employability skills and foster effective parenting skills.

h) The Peel Youth Village homework club in the Acorn Community offers youth ages 12-18 years assistance with their educational needs. Improvement in literacy skills and numeracy skills has been reflected in school progress reports.

4. Events Planned in September to Promote Literacy and Lifelong Learning

During the month of September 2009 many organizations will be hosting educational and fun filled events to celebrate Literacy Month in Peel, see Appendix II. These include:

- Brampton Festival of Learning 2009
- Literacy Day event at Erin Meadows Library in Mississauga
- Mississauga Literacy Committee sponsored community literacy event
- Caledon Parent Child Centre Pajama Nights
- Literacy workshops for parents at the Ontario Early Years Centres across Peel
- Special reading times across Peel
- Le Collège du Savoir will hold events to celebrate Francophone literacy
- Employment Resource Centres located at 6715 Millcreek and 10 Peel Suite B will host celebrations of literacy in Peel.

The month will culminate with Dr. Janette Pelletier, professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, presenting research conducted on the Family Literacy Program. Dr. Pelletier will present the pattern of benefits on the language and literacy development of children and parents, and describe the next phase of her research.

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CONCLUSION

In support of the planned events and in recognition of the outstanding literacy programming delivered every day, Regional Council is requested to proclaim September 2009 as Literacy Month in Peel and to demonstrate its commitment through the participation by members of Council in literacy activities and events across Peel.

Janet Menard
Commissioner of Human Services

Approved for Submission:

for D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

For further information regarding this report, please contact Laura Mitchell-Collier at extension 7247 or via email at laura.mitchell-collier@peelregion.ca

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c. Legislative Services

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APPENDIX I

Proclamation

LITERACY MONTH IN PEEL

September, 2009

WHEREAS, the Region of Peel – Human Services Department (Ontario Works in Peel division and Children's Services division) and the Peel-Halton-Dufferin Adult Learning Network have partnered to raise awareness of events promoting literacy and lifelong learning in Peel throughout the month of September 2009;

AND WHEREAS, each year United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) celebrates International Literacy Day on September 8th to highlight the importance of literacy to individuals, communities and society;

AND WHEREAS, Canada Post recognizes contributions made by individuals and organizations whose work raises literacy skills and support individual literacy successes;

AND WHEREAS, in 2008 more than 295,000 hours of training to more than 2,000 learners was delivered by service providers;

AND WHEREAS, 20,000 children per year are using and participating in quality, literacy-rich programs;

AND WHEREAS, the regional values include a supportive and respectful environment, teamwork and quality service which are integral in partnerships and in providing quality literacy services throughout the Region;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the month of September 2009, be declared LITERACY MONTH in the Region of Peel.

Emil Kolb
Regional Chair

APPENDIX II
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LITERACY MONTH IN PEEL

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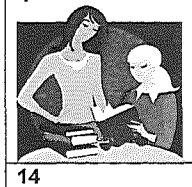
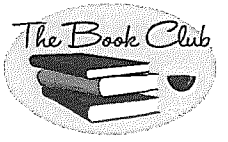
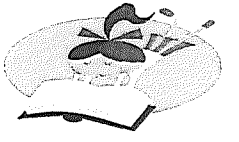
Literacy Month in Peel Activities- September 2009

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1 **Early Literacy Workshop** Gardenview OEYC Satellite 10:00 to 11:30	2 	3	4	5	6
7 	8 **International Literacy Day!**	9 **Early Literacy Workshop** Malton Neighbourhood Services LION 10:00 to 12:00	10 **Build your Child's Brain** Brampton Neighbourhood Resource Centre 9:30 to 11:00	11 	12 **Brampton Festival of Learning event** Brampton Farmer's Market 9:00 to 3:00	13 **Free Mississauga Library Author Festival** at the Living Arts Centre www.mississauga.ca for more info 10:00 to 3:00
14	15 **Make and Take Book Event** Malton Learn.Play. Care. Centre 4:30 to 6:00	16 **ABC Literacy Event** CDRCP Early Years site, 57 Mill St. Brampton (905)452-1973 10:00 to 11:30	17 **Television, Computers and Literacy: Workshop for Professionals.** www.cdrcp.com for more info 7:00 to 9:00 pm **Special Reading Time** at Mississauga Centre OEYC 10:30 to 11:00	18 **Special Reading Time** **Special Reading Time** Francophone Event 10:30 to 11:00; Sheridan Library 2:30 – 3:00 with Shelley White.	19 **Training for Family Literacy volunteers-** www.peelregion.ca for more info 8:00 to 4:00	20 **Free Entrance to the Peel Heritage Complex** during Brampton Festival of Learning www.peelheritagecomplex.org for more info.
21 **Emergent Literacy Conference** in Niagara	22 **Emergent Literacy Conference** in Niagara	23 **Mississauga Literacy Event**: Clear Language Havenwood Hub www.phdaln.com for more info 7:00 to 9:00 pm **Special Reading Time** at Caledon Parent Child Centre 11:15 – 11:45 with Mayor Morrison.	24 **Free Entrance to the Peel Heritage Complex** during Brampton Festival of Learning www.peelheritagecomplex.org for more info	25 **Special Reading Time** at Peel Family Shelter 10:30 to 11:00 with Janet Menard.	26 **The French Link: Peel Services Families Event** Shopper's World 10:00 to 3:00	27 
28 **Promoting home literacy practices to support early learning- research based practices** by Dr. Janette Pelletier 4:00 to 6:00.	29 **Special Reading Time** at Sheridan Villa 10:30 – 11:00 with Pamela Martindale-Nevin.	30 **Reading Strategies for Parents** The Valley Learn Play Care Centre 6:00 to 8:00			If you are interested in presenting a Special Reading Time in your Ward, please contact Judy Robillard at 905 791-7800 ext. 3832.	