



**RECLAIM**  
*Literacy*  
**2023-2024**

# ANNUAL REPORT

Making low literacy something future generations will only READ about

---

[WWW.RECLAIMLITERACY.CA](http://WWW.RECLAIMLITERACY.CA)

**Board of  
Directors  
2023-2024**

**President  
Gary Purcell**

**Vice President  
Gundie  
Roberston**

**Treasurer  
Patricia  
Chiricosta**

**Secretary  
Lisa Marcovici**

**Administrators**

**Mary  
Rutherford**

**Ibrahim Ahmed**

## Message from the President

Before reading this brief message, please take note that it's not AI generated.

It's important to make that statement for a few reasons. Firstly, it's just not cool that a few folks out there are clicking off their emotional access to genuinely express themselves and opting to have it done by something that generates way too much heat. Sorry if this sounds a little judgemental, but c'mon now.

The main reason why I bring this up is to acknowledge the fact that so many elements of our day-to-day are going through transitions at this point in time, and conceptualizing literacy is no exception. With this in mind, this little message/rant is intended to focus and celebrate the work Reclaim continues to do when it comes to addressing not only the base literacy challenges, but also the work that goes into bringing people together. This is the good stuff. From workshops to luncheons, and from theme-based gatherings to just being there for one another, the team and all the folks on the periphery continue to keep things honest and loving. So here's another huge thanks to everyone involved for another great year and for keeping things cool!

Hoorah!  
Gary

## From the Executive Director

And we are back! After several years of adjusting programs to keep everyone safe, 2023-24 saw a return to 'normal'. A new normal. Hybrid tutoring has become a part of our daily programs in both the learning centre and one on one tutoring. Along with this wonderful use of technology for our adult learners, we have also had the opportunity to initiate new partnerships and connections with many community organizations who share our interest in the promotion of literacy.

As our programs continue to grow and evolve, so does our staff. We are now able to have 2 full time, 1 part time, 2 summer students and several staff working on projects. It has been a pleasure to have worked this past year with such dedicated and committed individuals. RECLAIM's team is enhanced by a group of the most fabulous, generous and devoted volunteers - tutors, board members and special activities volunteers. We couldn't do what we do without you!

We look forward to continued growth and outreach in the community in order to meet our goal of 'making low literacy something future generations will only READ about.

Joy Fyckes

# Primary Programs

## Learning Centre Hybrid edition

*The Learning Centre operates year-round,  
49 weeks a year.  
Our one-on-one program operates  
50 weeks a year.*



This year we integrated 10 tablets to our Learning Center daily program. To aid in the positive integration of these tablets, we made sure each tablet was loaded with the apps that the learners need to meet their individual goals..

**23 full time learners passed  
through our Learning Centre  
in 2023-24**

**Total # of learning hours  
22540**

**Program features**  
Small group learning  
News for you  
Spelling/Grammar  
Digital Literacy



Our Learning Centre has a new app - IXL- that we've been incorporating into our classroom and one-on-one tutoring. Its extensive English and Math content, loaded on our tablets, offers lots of learning avenues in our lessons and promotes digital literacy.

**9 tutoring pairs  
12 volunteer tutors  
900 hours  
of individualized tutoring**

## One on one tutoring

### Program features

- Matched with trained volunteers to work online or in person on individual literacy goals.
- Tutoring time/place that fits with learner's schedule, family and work commitments.
- Tutoring sessions lasting for one hour, normally twice per week.
- Creation of a new role of one to one tutors who are available daily at the learning centre - to work on specific skills with the learning centre learners.

# Volunteers

**RECLAIM  
welcomed 16 new  
Tutors in  
2023-24**



**RECLAIM had a total of 46 volunteers,** including 29 tutors, 6 board members, 8 special event volunteers. For an impressive total of **22956** hours of volunteering!

## Tutor Check-In Meetings

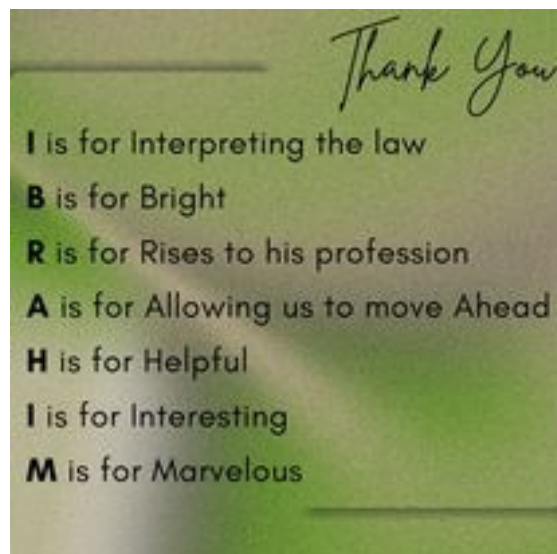
Each month a Tutor Check-In was held, giving our volunteers a chance to get updates regarding our programming and the literacy tools we have available to our students - both digital and in print. Moreover, the meetings offered a great opportunity for our tutors to connect and share their experiences and practices with one another, something that we hear from our volunteers is really valuable. The meetings have also helped us to create continuity across our tutoring sessions and build a network of strong, committed volunteers for our learners. We very much appreciate the dedication that our tutors show to our learners, and the skills and creativity that they bring to their sessions.

**16 volunteer tutors  
took  
our online training  
during 2023-24  
session**



We continue to offer our online tutor training via our membership in ProLiteracy. We have access to training for both new and veteran tutors!

Our volunteers were celebrated during Volunteer Appreciation week in April 2023 with special name poems written for them by our group of learners. Here is one example!



# Special Project 2022-2023

## Reseau Reussite Montreal

**10 sessions per week 3 hours for 10 weeks**  
**100 sessions total 300 hours**

RECLAIM worked with the James Lyng Adult Education Centre with their new and innovative Entrepreneurial class.

Our media facilitators worked with the students as they passed through the various stages of developing and implementing a smoothie shop, on location. There were many opportunities for digital literacy education including creating a website, logo, social media strategies for the project.

<https://www.jameslyngsmoothie.ca/>

<https://www.instagram.com/jlentrepreneurial/?hl=en>

Facilitators supported the students in using various platforms for making great presentations (including Google Slides, PowerPoint, Canva and more) We provided stand alone workshops for the groups specific topics with invited speakers:

- General Photography with emphasis on DIY methods for doing great product shots
- Creating a logo with digital support
- Stop Motion animation



Réseau réussite  
Montréal



Welcome to Healthy Haven - Refresh and Rejuvenate with Our Delicious Smoothies



# Special Project 2023-2024

## Réseau Réussite Montréal

### Resilience class

Twice a week for 8 weeks

#### Course assignment “Me and...”

Each student made their own video piece about an important social topic. They were free to explore various methods of digital storytelling from interview based pieces to stop motion animation and beyond. The results were very interesting and this work helps the whole group (students, teachers and digital media facilitators) gain empathy for each other.

### Secondary 1 and 3 English class

Twice a week for 20 weeks

#### Using digital literacy

- Indigenous arts.
- Tenants Rights!
- More...

Both levels created video PSAs (Public Service Announcements) using PowerPoint!

Emphasis on using school laptops and software!

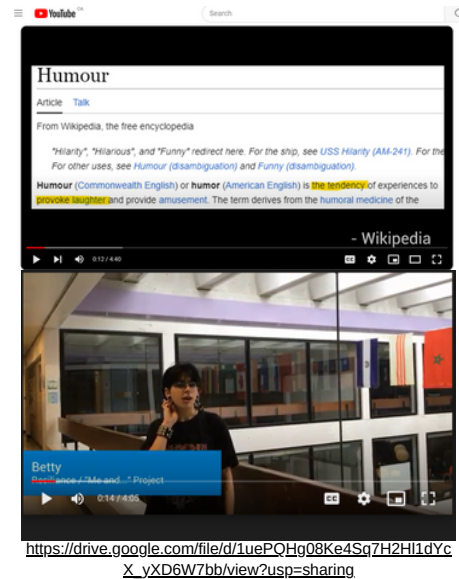
#### Math Graduating class

- Lunch time video capsules captured during a week of lunch hours from students in their final year
- Reflections on their time at James Lyng
- Centering math students experiences
- Native language with subtitles in English

#### New Volunteer Initiative

Support for English language learners

Help with conversation, listening & pronunciation



Réseau réussite  
Montréal

# Special Project 2023-2024 Centraide Recovery Fund

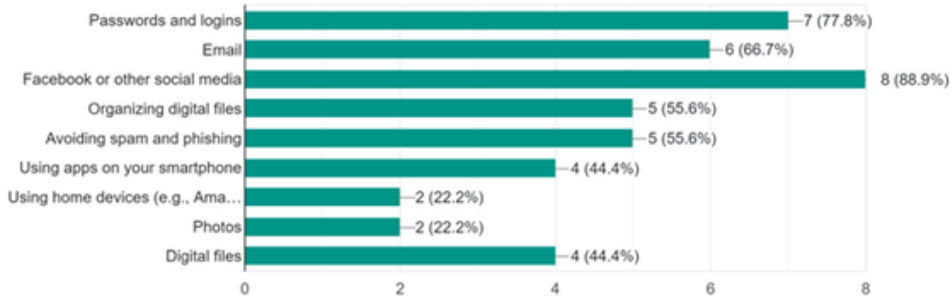
**Goal:** Create a support network offering help with basic technology, with a focus on hardware issues.

## Assessed Technology Support Needs with Survey and Focus Groups, and Harmonization with Learning Centre Programming

- For example, everyone needed help using Zoom, especially at home. All had access to a laptop/desktop and the Internet.

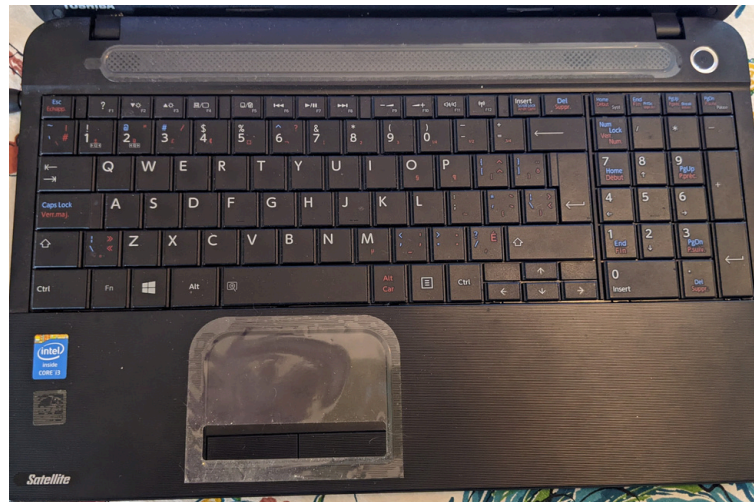
What else do you need help with?

9 responses



## Created a Database of Devices in Google Forms

- Tracked devices of 17 learners, tutors, and community members
- 17 have a laptop/desktop; 13 have an additional device (smartphone, tablet)
- Database includes photos of equipment, including keyboards
- Manuals from The Manual Library of Internet Archive linked by device



## Snapshot of Individual Digital Support

In a month at RECLAIM:

- 46 instances of individualized technology support provided by staff and tutors
- Help given to learners, tutors, and our extended community network
- Frequent needs were ID credentials, downloading applications, and searching for information
- **1/3 of digital support interactions required information about hardware**
- 2/3 of interactions also supported general literacy (e.g. signing up for a literacy app, identifying and entering search terms)

# Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for the governance of RECLAIM and continues to meet regularly over Zoom.

With more funding having been secured in 2023-24, the board was active in ensuring that our mission was being respected, and our money was being well spent! The board met online 5 times during the year - and held 8 votes via email.



Ibrahim, Mary, Gary, Gundie  
Patricia, Lisa  
pictured with Program Manager Eric

## AGM 2023

Our AGM was held on June 1, 2023

With 8 voting members participating and 3 guests in attendance, the Activity report, Financial statements, naming of auditors for 2023-24 and the slate of officers was presented and approved.



Amanda

Joy

Eric

### OUR TEAM

Joy Fyckes- Executive Director  
Eric Craven - Program Manager  
Amanda Hunsaker - Coordinator of  
Learning Centre & Volunteers

#### **Summer staff:**

Hana & Hala

#### **Project staff:**

Mariana, Shira & Shelby



# Community Outreach

We continue to be active in the community - our most popular activity is “sharing the love of reading” with the donation of books.

This past year over 3500 books were donated to schools, daycares, community groups and individuals at 12 different events .

**Many of the books donated are thanks to our partnership with First Books Canada.**

For international Literacy Day, September 2023, we launched our first “take a book - leave a book” at a local Montreal Airport Hotel. The idea meant to encourage travelers to grab a book while heading off on a trip or returning from a trip!



Book giveaway at the end of year June 2023 family BBQ at Riverview Elementary (with Literacy Quebec)

Our celebration of International Literacy Day each September, has turned into a share the love of reading event. In 2023, as our storage area was limited, we gifted twenty 150\$ gift certificates to local organizations to support them in the purchasing of books to be used in their programs. Recipients included local daycares, community groups, senior clubs and local schools.



# Community Outreach

Our alphabet pancakes continue to be a 'tasty; way to encourage family literacy in the home.

Over 1500 pancakes were served up at three events in 2023-24.



The Embers (Girl Guides of Canada) Lasalle troop, who received a 'pancake' event in fall 2023, paid it forward by helping to wrap over 95 books for a Christmas Party put on by the Erin Sports Association for underprivileged children.

## Breakfast with Santa

We partnered up with the Suspicious fish for a fun-filled morning of pancakes, a visit from Santa & Santa reading the children's stories!



# Summertime program

Thanks to our grant from HRDSC to hire two summer student, we had two extra pairs of hands to help plan and implement several summer activities.

Throughout the summer of 2023, Over 32 seniors participated in either our Internet Garden Cafe or our Garden Games over a period of eight weeks. From arts & crafts to puzzles to active games in the garden - each session ended with a light lunch!



# Support to Summer Daycamps

RECLAIM has a special partnership with BGC Dawson Summer Camp enabling us to bring literacy workshops to the children attending the camp. From a yoga workshop with Dragonbunny, a visit from Pat's Pets, hosting a fundraising bake sale - we were able to work with 25-30 children each week for a period of 8 weeks .

Thanks to BGC Dawson for welcoming us as we bring literacy activities to summer camps. None of this could be possible without our partnership with the Suspicious Fish and the financial support of Réseau réussite Montréal.



Weekly activities included a visit from Pat's Pets & DragonBunny Yoga. Ninety Literacy Bags were handed out as part of 'ninja turtle' week.



We celebrated the end of summer with a Literacy Fair for the 80 BGC Dawson summer daycamp youth. The children participated in games to collect letters - then got together in their groups to form words, The winning team earned over 80 points and got to pick the ice cream flavours for the last day of camp!



# Lunch & Learns

RECLAIM hosted 8 community-wide workshops supporting social and health literacy for older adults. Seniors from BGC Dawson, St. Columba House, Church of the Epiphany, and RECLAIM learners and tutors joined the talks. Each session was followed by a hearty lunch. About 25 to 30 older adults attended each session.



## 2023-2024 Schedule

**September 26:** Brain Gym®: Supporting Learning and Memory through Movement  
Lisa Marcovici, Director, Rekinexion, Founding Member, Brain Gym® Canada, RECLAIM Board Member - 24 attendees

**October 24:** Project P.A.L.: Supporting people living with mental health challenges  
Michaël Lamour, Co-Director, Project P.A.L. - 27 attendees

**November 21:** Understanding Artificial Intelligence - AI: A “Round Table” on What is AI and Why We Should Care  
Senior Action Quebec Webinar. Discussion led by Dr. Kim Sawchuk, Professor of Communications Studies, ACT Lab of Concordia University - 23 attendees

**January 30:** Do I still need this Medication?  
Senior Action Quebec Webinar, Presented by Emelie Bortolussi-Courval, RN, PhD(c), Canadian Medication Appropriateness and Deprescribing Network - 30 attendees

**February 27:** Housing Rights: What to Know  
Ibrahim Ahmed, Attorney, Morency Société d’avocats, RECLAIM Board Member - 29 attendees

**March 26:** The Importance of Posture and Balance as We Get Older  
Grace Loud, BScPT, Cert. MDT, Physiotherapist, Kinatex Dorval - 30 attendees



# Reading Challenges

& More book giveaways!

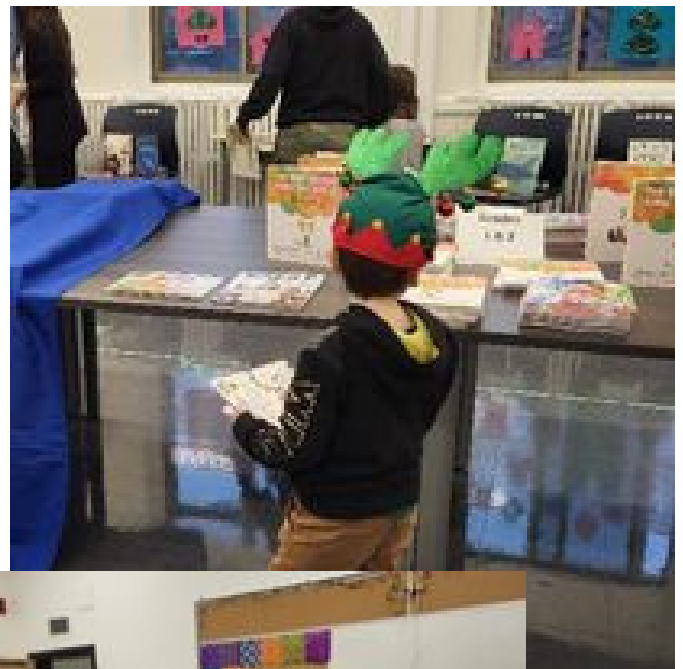
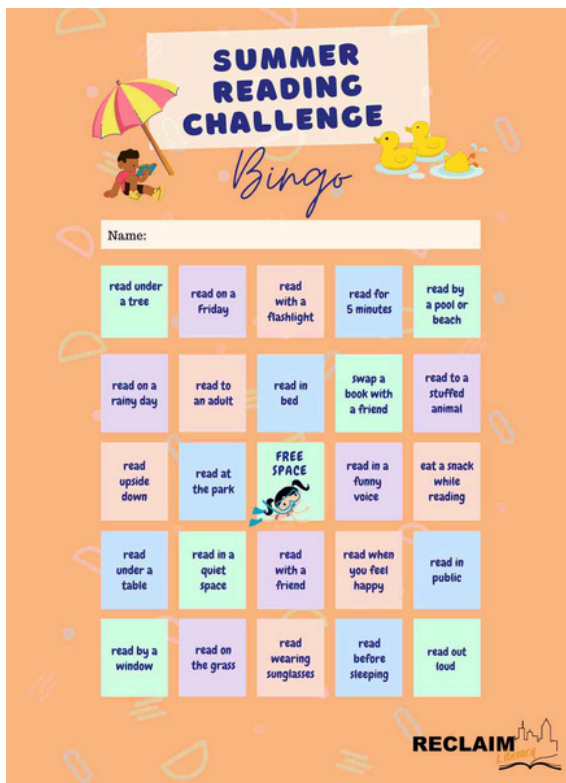
Three reading challenges were launched in 2023-24

Summertime: BGC Dawson

Christmas Break: Riverview Elementary & Verdun Elementary

Realizing not everyone may have books in their home to participate in the challenge, we provided books for the children to take home to put in their home libraries! In total over 300 children participated in the Christmas Break Challenge & 78 children in the Summertime Reading Challenge.

Over 750 books were distributed for these challenges!



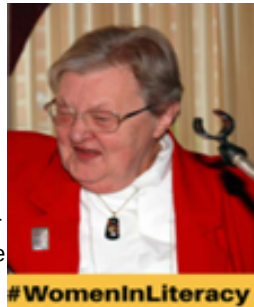
# RECLAIM Celebrates!

End of session 'la grande roue', 8 learners  
 Thanksgiving feast: 14 Learners, volunteers & staff  
 Christmas: 16 Volunteers, Learners & staff



**In addition to the usual Holiday celebrations, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas - RECLAIM also held an inaugural event - "A day of Grace" in 2023. There were 45 people in attendance for this special event, including members of Grace's family.**

In May of 2022, we were saddened to learn that a VIP of RECLAIM had passed away. Grace Saabas was a fixture at RECLAIM for over 35 years. As one of the first members of RECLAIM's Board of Directors, Grace served numerous roles throughout her years with us; Tutor, Tutor Trainer, Trainer for Tutor Trainers, Board member, President of the Board of Directors.



In 2005, Grace had begun to step back from some of her volunteer duties at RECLAIM. However, a situation arose where the organization was being steered in a direction that was not in keeping with our primary mission and we faced the real possibility of being unable to continue due to a loss of funding. Grace was quick to step up and rally the members, hosting several meetings in her home to ensure that the organization could take back control of our resources. She not only rallied folks, but then stepped up to serve on the Board of Directors. Eventually, Grace once again took on the role of President of the Board. With Grace back at the helm, we were able to rebuild, stronger than ever.

We cannot even begin to tell you how many lives Grace changed. Not only the learners who she worked directly with, doing everything from one on one tutoring, to small group tutoring, but the hundreds of RECLAIM volunteers and staff she trained, ingraining in them the passion for literacy. To say that Literacy was a focus of Grace's life, would be an understatement. She was an encyclopedia of knowledge, a dedicated volunteer, a networker!

When seeking to recognize Grace's contributions to RECLAIM, naming a book shelf, study room, or any symbolic designation did not seem adequate. What Grace was, was a gatherer. She thrived on bringing people together – all in the name of Literacy. She often hosted 'events' at her home. There were meetings, get-togethers, planning sessions where one could always count on Grace to be the generous hostess, working to in turn have people work together.

It is for that reason we have decided to dedicate an annual event named "A day of Grace" – where our learners, volunteers, staff, partners & donors can come together to celebrate the achievements of RECLAIM.



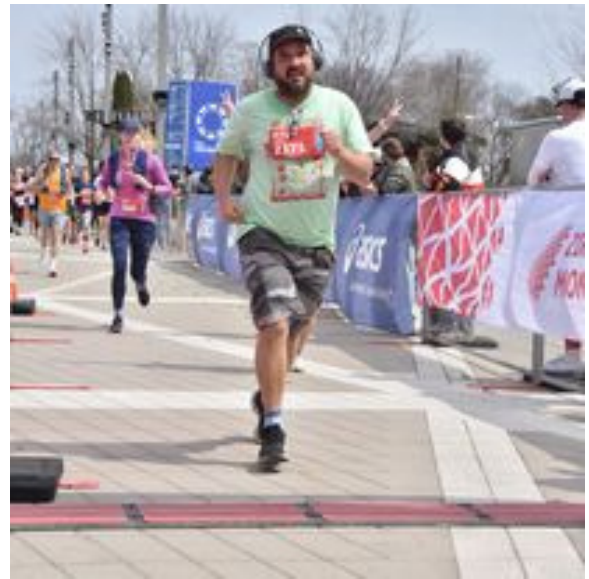
Celebrating a day of Grace  
 May 15th, 2023

LEARNERS	VOLUNTEERS	DONORS
<b>G</b> rateful	<b>G</b> iving	<b>G</b> enerous
<b>R</b> esilient	<b>R</b> esourceful	<b>R</b> emarkable
<b>A</b> wesome	<b>A</b> wesome	<b>A</b> wesome
<b>C</b> ommitted	<b>C</b> onscientious	<b>C</b> haritable
<b>E</b> ngaged	<b>E</b> xtraordinary	<b>E</b> xceptional



# Fundraising

Along with our Annual Direct Mail Campaign (which raised just over 3K), we once again entered a team of runners into the Scotiabank 21k Montreal race. Our 2023 team of Caroline & Lisa doing a 10k virtual run, Eric and his son Sy doing the onsite 10K, and our fabulous Riverview Racers (Cedar, Ravyn and Oscar) teaming up to cover the virtual 5K run; earned us a total of 2356\$



**RUNNING  
FOR  
RECLAIM**

Support our  
team!  
April 22 - May 31

*A huge thank you to Literacy Quebec for coordinating this wonderful opportunity to raise awareness & funds. #LaceupforLiteracy*



# Representations & Networking

## Meetings and workshops

**RECLAIM'S Executive Director is proud to be a member of the following Boards of Directors/ Steering Committee, Governing Board:**

**Literacy Quebec President BOD**

**HSM Governing Board**

**Funville Board of Directors**

**MESCN (formerly AFC) steering committee**

Forty-seven on site workshops, webinars, meetings, etc, were attended by RECLAIM's Executive Director, staff and volunteers.

Many of the sessions continued to help us as we grow our programs and our network!

Literacy Quebec was particularly essential in providing many training opportunities for RECLAIM's board, staff, volunteers and learners.

Our Program Manager spent time in the community networking with various other organizations

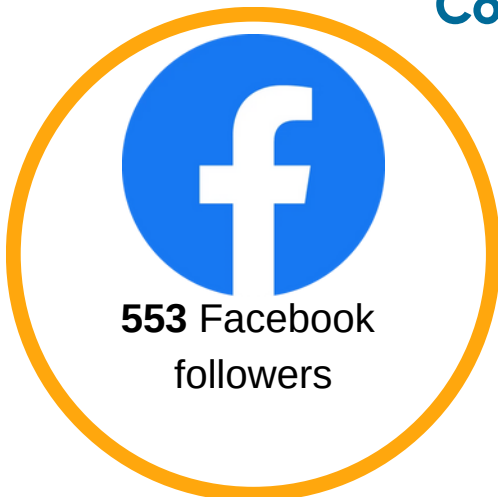


The Eva Marsden Centre for Social Justice and Aging Community Health Fair on March 1 at the Monkland Community Centre

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Knit-in  
June 15, 2023

In the lobby of Concordia University's EV Building

## Communications



# Our Partners

**BGC Dawson**  
**Centraide**  
**Church of the Epiphany**  
**CLC - Riverview & Verdun Elementary**  
**Dominos Pizza, Verdun**  
**Éducation et Enseignement Supérieur Québec**  
**Employment and Social Development Canada**  
**English Montreal School Board**  
**Erin Sports Association**  
**First Books Canada**  
**James Lyng Adult Education Centre**  
**Literacy Quebec**  
**MESCN**  
**Réseau Réussite Montréal**  
**ProLiteracy**  
**Seniors Action Quebec**



No annual report is ever complete without some words from our Learners. In 2023 the Learners began to produce a newsletter. Here are some examples from the Winter 2024 edition. Full editions can be viewed on our facebook page [facebook.com/reclaimliteracy](https://facebook.com/reclaimliteracy)

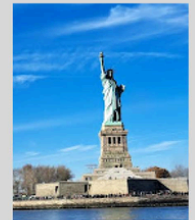
# The Respectful Learner News

Learners' work, activities and thoughts



**In this issue:**

- **Advocating for literacy**
- **Part 2 of The Yearbook Killer (serial novel)**
- **Talking about people**
- **Descriptions of neighbourhoods**
- **Poems**
- **Trip to New York City**
- **Birthday celebrations**
- **Tips for people who hate cell phones**



WINTER 2024

FIFTH ISSUE

## Favourite Things

My favourite thing is to go hunting with friends. We go hunting for goose and duck. I feed my family and friends. We share.

Terence



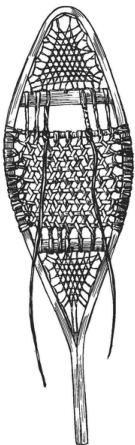
Stephen

When I was a kid liked  
to go Biking,  
to go Bowling,  
to go Fishing,  
to go Jogging,  
to go Kayaking,  
to go Skating,  
to go Skiing,  
to go Snowshoeing,  
to go Swimming,  
to go Walking,  
to play Basketball,  
to play Hockey,  
to Fly a kite,

and being with other people.

It's a nice thing to do before you get old and you can't do anything more.

And I did the most important thing for my future by going to school and getting an education and an apartment so I can get a decent normal job.



WINTER 2024

FIFTH ISSUE

## Advocating for Literacy

I would like to go to French school to learn the language of Quebec. It would be good for me. I would not have any struggle with the language when I leave the province because I can speak English. I have other friends that I could speak with in other languages. For example I could speak Patois languages. It is a struggle for me to speak French but I will learn it someday. I can not learn two languages at the same time. English is more comfortable and I already know it. I live in a neighbourhood that speaks majority English. Literacy is a problem for people who speak French, too. If you speak, read, and write well in English it is easier to learn French.

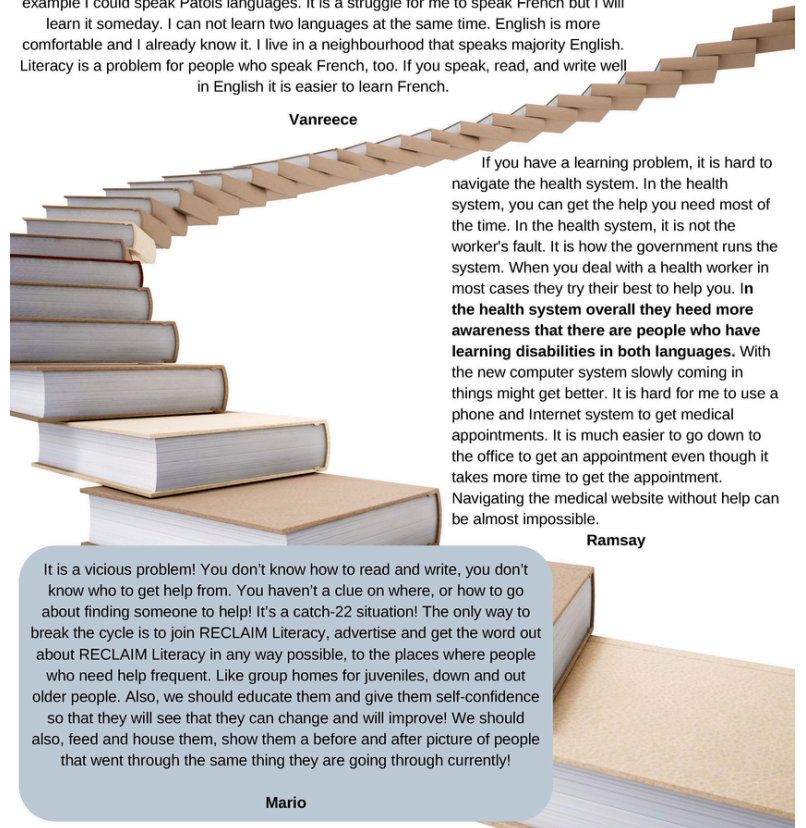
Vanreece

If you have a learning problem, it is hard to navigate the health system. In the health system, you can get the help you need most of the time. In the health system, it is not the worker's fault. It is how the government runs the system. When you deal with a health worker in most cases they try their best to help you. **In the health system overall they need more awareness that there are people who have learning disabilities in both languages.** With the new computer system slowly coming in things might get better. It is hard for me to use a phone and Internet system to get medical appointments. It is much easier to go down to the office to get an appointment even though it takes more time to get the appointment. Navigating the medical website without help can be almost impossible.

Ramsay

It is a vicious problem! You don't know how to read and write, you don't know who to get help from. You haven't a clue on where, or how to go about finding someone to help! It's a catch-22 situation! The only way to break the cycle is to join RECLAIM Literacy, advertise and get the word out about RECLAIM Literacy in any way possible, to the places where people who need help frequent. Like group homes for juveniles, down and out older people. Also, we should educate them and give them self-confidence so that they will see that they can change and will improve! We should also, feed and house them, show them a before and after picture of people that went through the same thing they are going through currently!

Mario





# RECLAIM *Literacy*

Making low literacy something future generations will only READ about

4322 rue Wellington, Verdun, Qc H4G1W4

[www.reclaimliteracy.ca](http://www.reclaimliteracy.ca)

514-369-7835