

Victoria READ Society



ANNUAL
REPORT
2003-2004





COVER PHOTOS: TIFFANY BROWN COOPER



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Victoria READ Society helps students of all ages in the Greater Victoria area learn basic academic skills through small classes, individualized help and a supportive, caring environment.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This past year, the Victoria READ Society helped 264 children and 102 adults learn literacy, language and numeracy skills. All the members of our

volunteer board of directors give their time, energy and money because we know how critical these skills are to success in almost all aspects of life today. We are pleased and proud that our work makes it possible for our teachers to help these learners make a real difference in their lives.

The READ Society is the only learning centre in Victoria that offers bursaries for children whose families cannot fully afford to pay fees. This year 48 bursaries were awarded. These bursaries are a lifeline for children who would otherwise continue to struggle at school, falling further and further behind each year. Our bursaries are made possible by donations from individuals, firms and foundations and we are very grateful for their generosity.

This year, the board created a new bursary named to honour Ellen Szita, a long time board member who resigned this past year when she moved up Island. Ellen began her association with READ many years ago as a student and as a result of her own experience has become a very effective and passionate advocate for literacy. This bursary is funded by donations from current and past board members.

Three other board members, Linda Petch, Norma Mickelson and Sarjit Manhas also left this year and we thank them for their contribution. In their stead we welcomed Darlene Bailey, Wendy Graham, Christine Stoneman and Barbara Walman.

Finally, on behalf of the board, I thank our executive director, Julie Holder, the teachers and staff of the READ Society for all their help and support. Their

commitment to the cause of literacy and their willingness to go the extra mile help make READ the success it is. We look forward to the coming year.

KRYSIA STRAWCZYNSKI
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS



A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Another year has gone by and despite the challenges of dealing with constant change in the non-profit environment, READ continues to provide excellent services to people with literacy, numeracy, language and learning challenges.

Thank you to staff, volunteers and board members for helping us maneuver our way through it all. Your commitment, skills and hard work are greatly appreciated. Every week, we hear from students, parents and community professionals about the positive differences you have made in peoples' lives.

A few of the highlights for READ this year:

- The initiation of a pilot project – “Back to Basics” – a small group program for children, funded by the Queen Alexandra Foundation,
- A successful new partnership established with Langham Court Theatre that raised \$3000 for our bursary program,
- Repairs and renovations to our Linden Avenue house with funding from the Victoria Foundation,
- Participation of staff, volunteers, board members and students in the Times Colonist Raise-a-Reader Day and annual Book Sale,
- The birth of “Random Acts of Poetry” – a new national project led by poet Wendy Morton to promote poetry and raise awareness about literacy.

We are grateful for the opportunity provincial and federal funding gives us to provide services to adult literacy and ESL students. This year saw some significant changes in the way we receive funding from the provincial government. But at the end of the year, programs were still thriving. We expect there will be more changes this coming year as we move closer to the provincial election.

We were encouraged last year by the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech from the Throne upon the opening of parliament. This speech outlined the provincial government's commitment to literacy. Some excerpts:

Your government wants British Columbia to become recognized as the most literate location in North America by 2010.

It is estimated that 40 per cent of adult British Columbians have low literacy skills. They have difficulty in reading, writing and basic numeracy skills that place them at a severe disadvantage in their everyday lives.

Many adults cannot read at all. They cannot fill out job applications, read a map, use an ATM machine or balance a chequebook.

Low literacy is directly tied to low income and unemployment.

Your government is committed to tackling this serious social challenge, for young and old alike.

Every British Columbian should experience the benefits and the opportunities of literacy.

To that end your government will launch a major new initiative to foster literacy throughout B.C. — enhancing reading, writing, numeracy, as well as computer literacy and proficiency in English for all British Columbians.

A new Premier's Advisory Panel on Literacy will be created to assess British Columbians' most urgent needs in literacy and recommend actions for improvement.



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Your government will provide new funding for literacy initiatives aimed at leveraging matching contributions from private donors.

Moreover, your government will double its annual contribution to the Adult Literacy Cost-Shared Program and will challenge the federal government to do likewise.

We at READ hope that this will mean more support and funding for front line, direct services.

Finally, thanks to all our supporters, funders and donors. We could not do what we do without your personal and financial contributions. We know there is a great deal of competition for donor support from many worthy and important causes and we thank you for making literacy one of your priorities.

JULIE HOLDER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ADULT BASIC SKILLS (ABS) AND BASIC ACADEMIC SKILLS FOR EMPLOYMENT (BASE)

The Adult Basic Skills program has provided basic literacy and numeracy skills for adults in our community for 18 years. During the past year we provided services for approximately 35 men and women from age 18 to 50. This year there were a number of changes to the program. We said good-bye to two of our instructors, Judy Forman and Debbie Booth-Johnson. Both were excellent teachers who contributed a great deal to the students and the program. In 2004, we changed the name of the program intended for clients of the Ministry of Human Resources to Basic Academic Skills for Employment. This program is now 18 weeks in length. The Adult Basic Skills program is now a 12 week program that is intended for clients funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

Although there are changes, there are also things that have stayed the same. The most important of these is the determination of our students to improve their academic skills. Another is the tremendous support the students receive, not only from each other and the staff, but also from our volunteer tutors. During the last year we had five wonderful volunteers who devoted their time to assisting the students with their studies. Three of these people have volunteered for at least two years.

Leland Wong has been a tutor for the last three years. For much of this time he has come in to work with the students twice a week, even though he is a student himself and works at several part-time jobs. His specialty is viewed by many of the students as mathematics, but he assists in every aspect of the program. Elinor Rhynas has come once a week for the last four years. She has a special gift for helping students learn to write, but is always available to work on whatever the student feels is most important. Mike



Brodsky has come once or twice a week for the last fourteen years. Oral reading, pronunciation and vocabulary development are his forte. We are very privileged to have such a talented and dedicated group of volunteers.

During this last year, Ministers of Human Resources, the Honourable Murray Coell and the Honourable Stan Hagen visited our Douglas Street office. This was a great opportunity to show the provincial government how much our students value the chance to improve their reading, writing, mathematics and computer skills. We are certain that this interest in the program reflects the government's understanding of the critical importance of literacy education to help adults overcome the barriers to employment and a more fulfilling life.

HELEN THOMAS
ABS/BASE COORDINATOR



ROSE'S STORY

All through my life I always knew how important getting a good education was.

Throughout my entire education (K-12) I struggled with English. I knew that I would have to deal with this subject if I was going to continue on to college. I managed to put it off until 2003 when I found myself out of work and not knowing what I wanted to do for employment. It seemed like everywhere I applied for work the company

required that its applicants have a grade 12 or equivalent, or a certificate specializing in a career. I only had a GED with a grade 10 English level when I left high school over twenty years ago.

When I decided to enter the READ Society in November, I had to overcome my biggest fear, English.

The staff were very kind and understanding. The instructor encouraged me to return when I felt that I could write the test. I told her a little more about what I considered my special needs. I really felt that I had been heard when I did return and they had made sure that I was feeling safe and comfortable on the day that I was doing my test. After I had done my test the instructor informed me that I was reading and writing at a very low grade level but my vocabulary was at a high second year college level.

Six months later I have started writing my autobiography and have since put it on the Internet. I am now reading and writing at a grade 11+ level and am planning on transferring to college with a career in mind.

Some of the things that I have found that work for me while I have attended the Victoria READ Society have been the flexibility of each teacher and their teaching style, the one-on-one support that each of us students receives and the size of each class. These factors may not be major for most people but they are for people with very special needs.

ROSE HENRY,
ABS STUDENT

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICES FOR ADULTS (ELSA)

R EAD has been providing English as a Second Language programs since 1990. The current ELSA program is funded by the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. The goals of the ELSA program are to provide immigrants and refugees with:



- improved English language skills in oral and written communication,
- improved literacy, and
- an increased knowledge of life in Canada and Canadian civil society.

READ offers three levels of classes including literacy at Level 1. This year we served 67 students from China, Taiwan, Korea, Viet Nam, Thailand, Russia, Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, India, Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, Panama, Colombia, Argentina, Kenya, and Estonia. Of this number:

- 70.7% of the students are now employed,
- 43% will continue with English training in the fall,
- 9.2% have discontinued school for family reasons (this includes pregnancy, moving to other cities or family obligations),
- 7.6% have bought or started their own business.

One of our mandates is to introduce students to Canadian culture. To this end we toured the Legislature and the Royal British Columbia Museum. We enjoyed the work of E.J. Hughes and Emily Carr at the Art Gallery of Victoria. We took part in "Be a Tourist in Your Own Hometown". Most memorable was our tour of Government House and the unplanned meeting with the Lieutenant-Governor. We were thrilled when we had our picture taken with her!

CINDY VAARTNOU
ACTING ELSA COORDINATOR

Some ELSA Success Stories

In September a young man from Morocco joined our ELSA literacy/level 1 class. He had a noticeable stutter and had not done well in school as a child and eventually quit school in grade 5. He came to READ not knowing the alphabet. He could only say and copy his name. By October he was able to read the alphabet. By November he knew the sounds of the letters and had a sight vocabulary of 20-25 words. He found support and friendship with the other students at READ. By December he stopped stuttering in class. He continued to learn to read and write but his oral skills just blossomed. By June he had 2 full-time job offers and had to decide which one to take.

Last year a shepherd from Ethiopia who had never been to school came to READ. He did not know how to hold a pencil and he could not recognize any letters or words. He went on to learn how to write his name, recognize and understand the alphabet and numbers and read simple English passages. He now has 2 jobs, owns a car, and has a learner's licence.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Individualized Classes

It was another successful year, full of wonderful accomplishments by students and teachers in our individualized classes for children and youth. READ has been offering remedial programs in the basics – reading, writing, math and study skills – since 1976.

In the summer we offered our week-long informal summer learning camps as well as three sessions of structured classes. Throughout the regular school year we served over 260 students in our one-to-one or one-to-two classes. Currently we run classes from three locations – Fairfield, Saanich and Sidney. Most classes run between 2:30pm and 7:30pm, Monday to Thursday, with classes on Saturdays by special arrangement



Student progress is evident in their writing, which was published and distributed in two editions of “In Words.” Teachers participated in various fundraising and community events: Times Colonist Book Sale and Raise a Reader, Esquimalt Healthy Kids’ Fair, Oak Bay Tea Party Parade, Island Parent’s Education Fair and Family Fest at Cedar Hill Recreation Centre.

JANIE HARRISON
COORDINATOR, CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS





Some quotes from parents:

Her teacher is awesome and really tailors her teaching to [my daughter's] learning style. [My daughter] really likes her teacher and so does look forward to going to READ. I can't say enough about her teacher. She's wonderful and really works well with my daughter."

"[My daughter] is [now] able to read with confidence and sound out problem areas as well as comprehend what she is reading. Thank you, and especially to [her teacher] for her sincere, genuine kindness and care and always a beautiful smile."

"The written evaluation from the teacher is excellent! [His teacher] truly advocates for my son and SUPPORTS him. He really respects his teacher. She is very organized and well-prepared. We are very blessed to have her as my son's teacher."

BACK TO BASICS PROGRAM

In spite of our best efforts to raise sufficient funds, every year we have a long wait list for bursaries. We hate to keep a child waiting for help, so to address this challenge, READ began

offering a small group program in May called "Back to Basics". Two groups of children from our bursary program waitlist met twice a week to work on homework, assignments and individual learning challenges with one of our professional teachers and a volunteer. Children stay in the program until funding is available for a full bursary for individualized help. This pilot project is funded by the Queen Alexandra Foundation and will continue in the fall of 2004.

READ BURSARY FUND REPORT

READ is committed to providing professional after-school instruction in reading, writing and mathematics to children who need our help. The READ Bursary Fund was created over 20 years ago to ensure that children whose families cannot afford the full cost of tuition can still access our individualized remedial programs. The demand for help continues to grow each year, often resulting in a lengthy waitlist. Since its inception, the READ Bursary Fund has provided financial assistance to over 1,500 school-age students. This year, READ bursaries helped 48 children to attend classes. It is gratifying for all of us to see these young students gain confidence in their skills and discover a new eagerness to learn.

READ's Bursary Fund Committee continues to provide thoughtful guidance and support. We are grateful to the Board of Directors and to the parents of bursary recipients who have supported us in our various fundraising endeavors. We are truly fortunate to receive generous financial support from the individuals, foundations, service clubs and corporations listed and acknowledged in this annual report. Along with READ's exceptional teachers and administrative staff, they are ensuring the continuation of this invaluable program.

VICKY AUSTIN
BURSARY MANAGER



VICTORIA READ SOCIETY GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES
THESE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

DONORS & FUNDERS
2003-2004

Susan Adams
Anonymous (7)
Vicky Austin
Joan Axford
Darlene Bailey
Dr. Norman Bailey
Lydia Baran
Jan Beckett
Mary Beeching
Peter Beliveau
Carol Bishop
Judy Blenkiron
Lori Boittiaux
Janet Bol
Debbie Booth-Johnson
Diane Carson
Hatty Copus
Dr. Wendy Donawa
Roy Emperingham
Angela Gibbs
Wendy Graham
Elizabeth Grove-White
Charlotte Haggard
Myrna Hall
Mark Hallam
Janie Harrison
Mary A. Hess
Julie Holder
Dr. Myer Howowitz
Joseph A. Isenager – In
memory of Victor Hess
Sydney Jackman
Pat Javorski
David Johnson
Anton J. Karch



Donna Lambert
Patrick Lane
Lynn Langford
Susan Link
Alison Mabee
Chris MacPherson
Alison Marchant
Carol & Gary Martin
Hank Mathias
Becky Matthews
Shurley Mazerolle
Linda McConnan
Hilarie McMurray
Catherine Moffat
David Moore
Dennis Moore
Elaine Parmenter
Kerry Patten
Linda Petch
Terry Power
Janis Price
Dr. J. Rae
Margy Ransford
Elinor Rhynas
Sandra Richardson
Shirley Richardson
Elizabeth Riehm
Fran Sadler
Frank Somers
Patti Stockton

Ken & Deanna Stratford
Krysia Strawczynski
Ellen Szita
Audrey Thomas
Helen Thomas – In memory
of Grace Alexander
Michael Torontow
Cindy Vaartnou
Peter Vaartnou
Peter Van Rheenan
Susan Veit
Barbara Walman
Carmen Wear
Leslie G. Wood
JoAnn Zelen
BC Gaming Policy &
Enforcement Branch
Cady Graphics
Coast Capital Savings
Foundation
Fernwood Home Support
Services Society
Kiwanis Club of Victoria
Needs of Victorians Society
Peter Vaartnou Law Corp.
Planet Organic
Provincial Employees
Community Services Fund
PSI Consulting Ltd.
Queen Alexandra
Foundation for Children

Rotary Club of Victoria
RBC Foundation
Sara Spencer Foundation
Scipio Consulting Ltd.
Sidney Rotary Club
Soroptimist International
of Greater Victoria
Superannuated Teachers
of Saskatchewan, Victoria
Branch
TPC The Planning Centre Inc.
Times Colonist
Vancouver Foundation
Vancouver Island Chapter
Romance Writers
Vancouver Island Chapter
Romance Writers Association
of America
Van-Isle Wallaby Club
Victoria Foundation
Fiona Hyslop Fund
Hugh & Helen Mogenson
Fund
Youth Supporting
Community
Walrus Holdings Ltd.
WCG International
Consultants Ltd.
Zonta Club of Victoria

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ministry for Children and
Family Development
Ministry of Community,
Aboriginal and Women's
Services
Ministry of Human
Resources
Human Resources Skills
Development Canada

VOLUNTEERS

The Victoria READ Society relies on the commitment and support of volunteers. We are governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Volunteers provide one-on-one tutoring for students in Adult Basic Skills (ABS), Basic Academic Skills for Employment (BASE) and English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) who need help in addition to their classroom time. Volunteers help with Bingo shifts, special events, office assistance and newsletter mailings. Hats off to READ's volunteers!

ABS/BASE

Mike Brodsky
June Fletcher
Elinor Rhynas
Delyse Tomaselli
Leland Wong

ELSA

Ross Grant
Julie Lambert
Jane Patterson
Carolyn Pytlyk
Janice Quigley
Liz Stannard
Caroline Startin

BINGO

Steven Leithwood
Lesley Nixon

MAILINGS

Terri Carelius
Ken Halls

C.J. Hogben
Tawnya Jones
Ed Lafortune
Charmaine Lovell
Marlene Luinstra
Sharon Sinclair
Marci Watson
Dolores Wilkinson

GARAGE SALE

Lita Bablitz
Lisa Cartwright
Brad Harrison
Dave Harrison
Janie Harrison
Lindsay Hines
Julie Holder
Ann Kingerlee
Roy Kingerlee
Linda McConnan
John Oldale
Patti Stockton
Helen Thomas

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Darlene Bailey
Wendy Graham
Elizabeth Grove-White
Myrna Hall, *Vice-chair*
Susan Link, *Treasurer*
Patti Stockton
Christine Stoneman
Krysia Strawczynski, *Chair*
Ellen Szita
Barbara Walman
JoAnn Zelen

STAFF

ADMINISTRATION

Julie Holder
Executive Director
Linda McConnan
Financial Officer
Vicky Austin
Bursary Manager
Diane Carson
Administrative Assistant
Mieke Larsen/Yvonne Blair
Accounts Receivable

ABS/BASE PROGRAM

Debbie Booth-Johnson &
Helen Thomas
Program Coordinators

ELSA PROGRAM

Donna Lambert
Program Coordinator
Jan Beckett
Caroline Startin
Willa Sutherland
Ai Linh Trinh
Cindy Vaartnou
Acting Program Coordinator

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Janie Harrison
Program Coordinator
Lisa Cartwright
Hatty Copus
Ann Hietkamp
Lindsay Hinds
Pat Javorski
Amanda Johnson
Ann Kingerlee
Robyn Mor
Margaret Ransford
Liz Stannard
Jenn Strachota

PARTNERS

The Victoria READ Society is affiliated with and/or a member of:
ABC Canada
ASPECT (Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training)
Community Social Planning Council
ELSA-Net
International Reading Association
Literacy BC
National Adult Literacy Database/National Literacy Secretariat
TEAL (Teachers of English as an Additional Language)
VEAN (Victoria Employment Agency Network)
Victoria ESL Network
Volunteer Victoria

We are pleased to acknowledge READ staff, board members, students and friends who enthusiastically volunteered for the Times Colonist's Raise a Reader Day and 7th Annual Book Sale.

Keith Austin • Vicky Austin • Wendy Graham
Myrna Hall • Janie Harrison • Julie Holder
Susan Link • Linda McConnan • Elinor Rhynas
Patti Stockton • Jenn Strachota • Krysia Strawczynski

VICTORIA READ SOCIETY STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS (UNAUDITED)

for the Year Ended June 30, 2004

	GENERAL FUND		BURSARY FUND		ENDOWMENT FUND	
	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003
REVENUES						
Program grants	\$364,893	\$498,917	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Tuition						
General	215,368	196,674	-	-	-	-
Bursaries	67,880	68,121	-	-	-	-
Canadian Employment Project						
Adult Basic Skills	36,193	9,700	-	-	-	-
Donations	16,609	28,050	75,948	59,340	100	-
Gaming	-	-	22,660	43,460	-	-
Assessments	8,940	10,295	-	-	-	-
Fundraising events	-	-	2,470	1,301	-	-
Other grants	-	9,500	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	270	3,089	-	-	-	-
	710,153	824,346	101,078	104,101	100	-
EXPENSES						
Salaries and employee benefits	522,832	645,385	6,697	-	-	-
Bursaries	-	-	66,340	65,741	-	-
Assessments	-	-	1,540	2,380	-	-
Rent	37,514	38,460	-	-	-	-
Advertising	23,500	16,849	-	-	-	-
Repairs and maintenance	21,314	14,190	-	-	-	-
Office and supplies	17,016	22,060	-	-	-	-
Telephone and utilities	13,553	12,439	-	-	-	-
Amortization	11,400	13,913	-	-	-	-
Equipment rental	9,264	10,179	-	-	-	-
Educational materials	8,854	5,464	-	-	-	-
Insurance and bonding fees	6,260	2,145	-	-	-	-
Professional fees	5,048	3,270	-	-	-	-
Educational development	3,733	4,075	-	-	-	-
Interest and bank charges	2,826	2,857	-	-	-	-
Bad debts	2,085	920	-	-	-	-
Transportation and travel	1,009	1,324	-	-	-	-
Client support costs	899	14,783	-	-	-	-
	687,107	808,313	74,577	68,121	-	-
NET EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$ 23,046	\$ 16,033	\$ 26,501	\$ 35,980	\$ 100	\$ -



**Victoria
READ
Society**

Head Office and
Read Learning Centre:

Victoria READ Society
720 Linden Avenue
Victoria, B.C. V8V 4G7

tel: (250) 388-7225
fax: (250) 386-8330

info@readsociety.bc.ca
www.readsociety.bc.ca



**Read
Learning
Centre**

Read Learning Centres
are also located at:

201 – 3440 Douglas Street
Victoria, B.C. V8Z 3L5

T: (250) 727-3938
F: (250) 708-0514

and

302 B – 9775 4th Street
Sidney, B.C. V8L 2Z8

Federal Charities Registration
No. 119285179RR0001

Society Incorporation
No. S 12,762

Private Post-Secondary Education Commission
Registration No. 344