

Adult reader on way

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One of B.C.'s first books written for and by adult learners will soon be on shelves throughout North America, local publishers said Tuesday.

The 35-page *Learning in Victoria* contains 15 stories by adult learners from various Greater Victoria learning programs.

Under the auspices of the Victoria READ Society, the group began meeting weekly in February, mapping out the book's content and design.

Books suitable for adults learning to read and write are in short supply, as most reading material for beginners is geared to children.

The book's authors include people who couldn't read or write as well as immigrants learning English.

Melanie Austin, READ Society director, said *Learning in Victoria* is the first book to involve local adult learners from conception to publication.

"Usually, people send in submissions to other adult-learning publications and get published, but they're not involved in picking the topics, the format, and learning new publishing skills. This is ownership.

"People who would not normally read are publishing, people who would not normally pick up a book are actually putting one together."

Three employees hired through a 10-month Canadian Job Strategies grant put the book together and are now working on a calendar.

The calendar will feature writings from 12 adult learners, all detailing "some kind of beginning," said Wordstream Press co-ordinator Suzanne Ives.

"The stories will be about learning to write a cheque, getting a driver's licence, reading for the first time to your children," said Ives.

Among the three people hired to work on the book was Ellen Szita, the Victoria woman who captured the attention of CBC personality and literacy advocate Peter Gzowski.

Szita, whose dyslexia hampered her ability to read, spoke at a Gzowski golf fund-raiser for literacy two years ago and was invited back to speak at the first Vancouver tournament last week.

Her life story is the subject of a National Film Board documentary to be released after Christmas.