

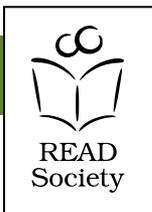


# Annual Report

2008-2009



*Over 30 years helping learners learn*



## VALUES

READ believes...

Literacy is essential for children, youth and adults.

Learning occurs most effectively in a safe, caring environment that honours and addresses individual learning styles and needs.

Professional teachers are critical to the development of effective literacy and learning solutions.

Healthy organizations promote diversity, humour and creativity.

Remaining client-focused and implementing sound financial stewardship ensures sustainable organizations.

Relationships founded on honesty and integrity provide a foundation for effective solutions.

## WORKING PRINCIPLES

**Respect:** All individuals—students, families, donors and funders, volunteers, community partners and staff—must be treated with respect.

**Collaboration:** Communities are best served when diverse, committed partners engage in creating sustainable solutions.

**Inclusion:** We must ensure that those who experience the issue are part of the solution.

**Celebration:** Literacy successes should be shared and recognized through stories and celebrations.

**Accountability:** We measure results and hold ourselves accountable for the effectiveness of our work.

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## VISION

Everyone in society has the literacy skills to contribute to their full potential.

## MANDATE

As a vibrant, community-based organization we help children, youth and adults gain literacy and basic skills, including reading, writing and mathematics.

We respond to the emerging needs of our communities and collaborate to make literacy and basic skills accessible to all.



## Message from the Chair

During my tenure as chairperson of READ's board of directors, I have learned this: The people who know about and support our organization's literacy work are intensely energetic, dedicated, devoted and strong.

We have such an excitement about our work because we see the huge need in our community for literacy support. Every day, we meet adults who have made a decision to ask for help improving their lives and children in need of extra help from a caring, professional teacher who can give them individualized attention so that they do not stumble. Every day, we are reminded that there are many in our community who do not have what we have: The joy and success of literacy.

This year, READ has made significant strides in developing innovative programs, strengthening its operations, and developing ambitious business and strategic plans. Our work continues to make us leaders in our field as we make inroads into workplace learning, expand our

work on First Nation territories and create new programs like Education Access, an outreach program in which we brought the teachers to the students.

All the while, our commitment to professionalism grounds our work, and 2008-2009, the Board supported the organization through the development and delivery of accountability policies and practices. Our governance, human resources, and finance committees provided the focus for this work. They paid particular attention to human resource planning, data management and security, volunteer management and communications.



Whatever turns the economy may take, READ is well-positioned to handle the bumps, as we have for more than 30 years. Now we need more people who are energetic, dedicated, devoted and strong to join us in our vision of ensuring everyone in society has the literacy skills to contribute to their full potential.



I compel you: Become a member today and help us make literacy and basic skills accessible to all. Your membership form can be found at [www.readsociety.bc.ca/member.htm](http://www.readsociety.bc.ca/member.htm).

*Individual Attention Helps Teen Excel*

Individual attention and “being taught in a way he could understand” has made all the difference for Dale, who came to READ for help in Grade 8 science and stayed right through to Grade 11.

“It was like a light bulb went off,” says his mom, Jodi. “The teachers at READ treat each child the way they need to be treated to learn,” she says. “All kids are not the same.”

Dale has a learning disability that makes it difficult for him to convey

his thoughts on paper. Jodi recalls how she agonized over whether she was to blame. “I felt in my heart that I had done something wrong, but the teachers at READ told me it was okay, and it didn’t mean Dale couldn’t learn.”

With individualized attention, Dale’s self-confidence soared, and his mom’s fears for his future eased. “Education is everything, and Dale excelled with the help he got at READ.”

## Message from the Executive Director

People of all ages come to the Victoria READ Society because they want to change their lives. Change looks different for each person. Change can mean understanding the work in the classroom better; reading road signs so you do not get lost in town; taking on new responsibilities at work or reading to your children.

In 2008-2009, READ teachers and staff provided community-based learning to some 650 people in Greater Victoria through individualized programs, outreach classes, research and workshops.

Every day, we hear how our work makes a difference. People tell us that after coming to READ, they are no longer afraid to try new approaches. They say they have new insight that lets them approach work differently and how coming to READ encouraged them to believe in their own abilities. Families that access READ's financial say we help reduce stress and anxiety related to learning challenges. This is what keeps us going.

This was the first year implementing a three-year strategic business plan. READ's goal is to provide literacy and learning services to more people—specifically, programs for youth, Aboriginal people and people at work. In 2008-2009 we spent the year focused on improving access to READ's literacy and learning programs and information access and creating more robust policies and practices for the Society.

In November, 2008 READ re-located its main office and teaching space to Quadra Village while continuing to provide services to children and youth in three other locations. We made a specific effort to promote our Education Access program into the Sooke School District and to expand our services in that area. READ partnered with the Greater Victoria School District to bring a remedial outreach program to two community link schools. This work was supported by a *Times Colonist* Raise a Reader 150th Anniversary Grant. We are using

what we learned to frame future outreach work.

Services to adults took different forms. Small classes and individual service continued at the Quadra office and expanded to three traditional territories on the Saanich Peninsula. READ continued to offer workshops in partnership with GT Hiring Solutions and continued its research work into workplace learning across the Region. We also in launched a second workplace learning program in partnership with the Community Council.

To meet requests for better program and service information READ refined and expanded its communication approaches. READ completely redesigned its information materials, expanded its advertising and launched a new website: [www.readsociety.bc.ca](http://www.readsociety.bc.ca).

Less visible was the internal work we undertook related to new policies and practices for volunteer management, data management and privacy, and professional development. By



systematically addressing these infrastructure components, READ is building a stronger Society to serve learners of all ages.

As service providers, we continuously assimilate new knowledge and new approaches, listen to those who want to learn, and work with partners to develop solutions that will have a positive impact for individuals. We know that literacy and learning are not options in contemporary society and it is incumbent upon READ and members of this community to find ways to reach and support learners who struggle. The direction we have mapped out for the next three years gives us the scope to explore new opportunities while at the same time retaining the focus on individual learners. And always, we find inspiration in the stories of learners like Rochelle, who says: “Being at READ has given me the confidence to move up in the world.”

## *Generations of Learning with READ*

Learning with the READ Society is a family affair for eight-year-old Abby, who gets help with her reading and math twice a week.

Abby's father attended READ when he was a child, so when Abby struggled in Kindergarten, her grandmother recalled how helpful READ had been so many years before.

Today, Abby is reading nearly at her grade level – in spite of having been diagnosed with a mild cognitive disability. “Abby loves coming to READ,” says mom Adrienne, who volunteers with READ as a receptionist. “Her reading lesson days are her favorite days of the week.”

As a university student and single parent, Adrienne says she is grateful that READ offers tuition support for children and youth from low-income households through its unique Education Access fund. “There’s no way I could afford to bring Abby to READ without the generous help.”

Today, rather than dreading school, Abby is confident in her skills and abilities. “The extra support she receives from READ has makes Abby happy and eager to go to school.”

## Programs and Services

### Children And Youth

READ's on-site children and youth programs operated close to capacity in Sidney, Quadra and Colwood. In Sidney and Colwood the demand for service increased and additional teaching staff was hired to meet that demand. Amongst the 204 students served were 50 who were supported through READ's Education Access program.

In 2008/2009, with funding from the *Times Colonist* 150th anniversary fund, READ piloted a project in partnership with the

Greater Victoria School District and with volunteers from the University of Victoria's Faculty of Education. The program offered after school services in two community-link schools. The project targeted students with high-learning needs and limited access to additional support. The experience in this first year is being used to determine and design outreach projects for 2009-2010.



## *READ sessions Help Create “Stellar” Student*

Once a child who dreaded reading, middle school student Caitlyn now scores straight As, thanks to a reading comprehension program created just for her at READ.

Caitlyn’s grandmother, Sue, says the individual help made the difference. “It’s been such a success story.” She brought Caitlyn to READ because her granddaughter struggled to sound out words and didn’t like reading aloud.

READ teacher Janie Harrison created a program focused on increasing Caitlyn’s confidence while also giving her skills to decode

long words and improve comprehension.

As Caitlyn’s skills gaps closed, her enjoyment in reading flourished. “She loved coming to READ. It was fun for her,” Sue says.

The proud grandmother says Caitlyn’s most recent report card is peppered with comments about Caitlyn’s superior writing skills and “stellar work” in her enriched classes.

For Sue, it’s not only the excellent grades that matter, but also that Caitlyn is now an eager, confident learner. “She always has a book beside her bed.”

# Programs and Services

## Adults

In 2008/09 READ offered diverse services to adults across Greater Victoria including adult remedial classes, individual remedial sessions and workshops.

In 2008/2009 READ re-structured its Adult Basic Skills classes to operate with fixed in-take dates. While this system was effective for the first half of the year, changes to funding criteria and overall funding reductions resulted in READ not offering adult classes after January 2009.

In August 2008, through a contract with GT Hiring Solutions, READ began offering workshops for adults in employment transition. Offered in the GT offices, this workshop met specific needs and reflected a different way for READ to deliver services to 419 adults.

In partnership with the Saanich Adult Education Centre and communities, READ expanded its Aboriginal program onto include three traditional territories— Tseycum, Tsartlip and Tsawout.



The interests and needs were very different across the territories resulting in distinctly different program content for each group of learners.

## Impact—pursuing her dreams

### *READ Gives Woman a Solid Foundation*

Today Shannon is pursuing her goal of becoming a veterinary pathologist but before coming to READ, she had given up on her dreams.

The 26-year-old struggled in school and dropped out of college. “I just figured I was not meant to be in school even though I really wanted to be,” she says. But it wasn’t until after she got fired from her job in a vet office that she was diagnosed with a severe learning disability and attention deficit disorder. “I was shocked – and relieved. I finally knew what my problem was.”

After the diagnosis, Shannon started



attending READ. “I was apprehensive. I thought ‘what could you change?’”

But in just two weeks, she began to see how much individual attention helps. “The teachers made sure I understood each concept before we moved on.”

Shannon tackled times tables, punctuation, the parts of speech and learned to read complex sentences. “My house was built, but there blocks missing so the house would teeter,” she says. “READ filled in all the blocks.”

### Workplace Literacy and Learning Research

In 2008/09 READ completed its workplace literacy and learning research project *Bridging Employer and Employee Needs in BC's Capital Region*. In March 2009, READ released two documents *Workplace Learning – Bridging Employer and Employee Needs in BC's Capital Region – Phase I Report* and *Workplace Learning – Literature Review* (see [www.readsociety.bc.ca/publications.htm](http://www.readsociety.bc.ca/publications.htm))

This information provided the foundation for READ's second research project in workplace learning. Funding for Phase II of this research project is allowing us to conduct organizational needs assessments with businesses in Greater Victoria that operate in the retail, food services, and accommodation sectors.

### SkillsPlus

In January 2009 READ, in partnership with the Community Council, won a BC Government Request for Proposals to develop and deliver Essential Skills training. This partnership brings together best practices in adult education, appreciative inquiry and workplace learning.

READ and Community Council staff are working with a minimum of five small businesses and up to 40 employees in Greater Victoria. Small business employers and employees in retail/wholesale/grocery, food services and hospitality/accommodation sectors will not only participate in an organizational needs assessment and receive training recommendations but will also have this custom-designed training program delivered by experienced educators.

## *Single Mother Sets Sights On School*

Rochelle quit school in Grade 9, but today, with READ's help, she's close to completing Grade 12 and is proudly setting a good example for her three daughters.

"Being at READ has given me the confidence to move up in the world," Rochelle says. She now plans to become a First Nations family support worker. "My self esteem has gone way up seeing what I can accomplish."

She has moved up four grade levels, and credits the individual help she received in READ's adult program with her

accomplishments. While she once thought of herself as a slow learner, Rochelle learned specific skills like sounding out words, spelling and sentence structure, and practiced writing sentences, paragraphs and essays. In math class, she learned to add, subtract, multiply and divide whole numbers, decimals, fractions and percentages.

"I could go at my own pace and get extra help when I needed it, and I got lots of one-on-one with the teacher," she says. "I'm not scared to learn now."

## Who We Are

### Board of Directors 2008-2009

Linda Bradford,  
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Carol Carman

Myrna Hall, Past  
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Angus Izard,  
Treasurer

Patricia Kimmett-  
Huxley

Graeme Kirby, Vice-  
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Nicholas Mosky

Maureen Nicholls

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Gillian Sherriff

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Jo-Ann Zelen

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Diane Carson

Tracey Childerhose

Tanya Demmings

Janie Harrison

Rebecca Harrison

Amanda Johnson

Stephen Kenning

Ann Kingerlee

April Macri

Tammy Moore

Erica Paine

Claire Rettie

Dianne Roe

Lois Theaker

Helen Thomas

Nancy Watters

Tricia Wautier

Peggy Williams-  
Gerlach

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Peggy Cady,  
Cady Graphics

Tracy Defoe, the  
learning factor inc.

Deborah Dupuis

Anne Glommen

Leish Interiors

United Builders

Chris Van Sickle,  
ResolveIT



## Donors and Program Sponsors

### Friends of READ

Capital Unitarian  
Universalist  
Congregation

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TD Canada Trust,  
retail real estate  
branch

### Literacy Supporter

Patricia Kimmitt-  
Huxley

David Leishman, MD

Susan Link

### Literacy Patron

Anonymous

Myrna Hall

Rotary Club of  
Saanich

JoAnn Zelen

Zonta Club of  
Victoria

### Literacy Sponsor

B.P.O Elks #2

Douglas Place Joint  
Venture

Angus Izard

United Builders

### Literacy Partner

Anonymous

BC Gaming Policy  
and Enforcement  
Branch

Provincial  
Employees  
Community Service  
Fund

*Times Colonist* Raise  
a Reader Fund

### Program and Project Partners

Camosun College

Canada Council for  
the Arts

Community Social  
Planning Council

Fairmont Empress

GT Hiring Solutions

Hemp and Company

Literacy BC

Ministry of  
Advanced Education  
and Labour Market  
Development

Ministry of Children  
and Family  
Development

Ministry of  
Housing and Social  
Development

Royal Bay Bakery

Tsartlip First Nation

Tsawout First Nation

Tseycum First Nation

Saanich Indian  
School Board

Greater Victoria  
School District

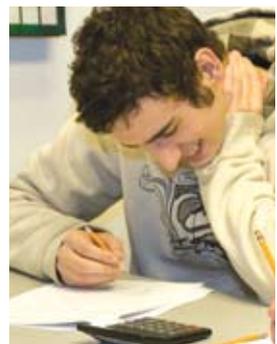
Service Canada

Sierra Systems

Spectrum Job Search

Thrifty Foods

*Times Colonist* Raise  
a Reader Fund



## Members, Volunteers and Friends of READ

Vicky and Keith  
Austin

Lucas Ballentine-  
Cole

Janice Beckett

Heather Beiermeister

Linda Bradford

Sara Brand

Anastasiia Braun

Mike Brodsky

Adrienne Carlson

Carol Carmen

Diane Carson

Tracey Childerhose

Virginie Cimon

Jean-François  
Cloutier Deraiche

Oleksandr Diachuk

Anna du Vent

Danielle Dzioba

Carol Fuller

Patrick Grant

Igor Grudetskyi

Myrna Hall

Janie Harrison

Alexis Hill

Suzanne Ives

Angus Izard

Amanda Johnson

Terence and Dawn  
Jones

Patricia Kimmett-  
Huxley

Graeme M. Kirby

Yuriy Kirushok

Alexander  
Kowalchuk

Melissa Le Geyt

Judy Love

Shirley Mazerolle

Linda McConnan

Dan McKay

Don Monsour

Alvaro Moreno

Wendy Morton

Nicholas Mosky

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Maureen Nicholls

Anatolii Oktysiuk

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Claire Rettie

Elinor Rhynas

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Elizabeth  
Schaffenberg

Gillian Sherriff

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Maryna Shulga

Laura Siberry

Michel and Bruce  
Somer

Krysia Strawczynski

Helen Thomas

Erica Thomas-Booth

Michael Torontow

Suzanne Veit

Wendy Warwysch

Deborah Wilson

Amy Woodruffe

Jo-Ann Zelen

Michelle Zoe



**LOCATIONS**

201 - 2631 Quadra St.  
Victoria BC V8E 3T4

T: (250) 388-7225  
F: (250) 386-8330

302B - 9775 4th St.  
Sidney BC V8L 2Z8

T/F: (250) 656-5021

Rm. 2001-345 Wale Road  
West Shore Child, Youth  
and Family Centre  
Colwood BC V9B 6X2

Teaching Room  
Fairfield Community  
Association  
1330 Fairfield Road  
Victoria BC V8S 5J1

Federal Charities Registration No. 119285179RR0001

Society Incorporation No. S-0012762

Private Career Training Institution Agency No. 344



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts  
du Canada



Provincial Employees Community Services Fund