

2012 - 2013 Report



Learning | Skills | Confidence



Who We Are

READ is a non-profit society that has served Greater Victoria families since 1976.

Our Vision

To live in a community where everyone has the literacy and numeracy skills to achieve their personal life goals and to contribute to their communities.

Our Mandate

As a vibrant, community-based organization we help children, youth and adults gain literacy and essential skills, including reading, writing and mathematics. We respond to the emerging needs of our communities and collaborate to make literacy and essential skills accessible to all.

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 essential skills solutions.
- Volunteers are integral to the services we deliver to the community.
- Healthy organizations promote diversity, humour and creativity.
- Sound financial management and services that meet identified needs will sustain the organization.
- 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 recognized and celebrated through stories and information sharing.

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

Our business is learning

At READ We...

- Assess individual and community needs
- Collaborate to effectively meet learner needs
- Inform programs by using best practices
- Develop literacy and essential skills programs and curriculum
- Teach individuals and groups
- Advocate for our students
- Facilitate community awareness and understanding about literacy and essential skills
- Build confidence and capability in individuals

Message from the Chair

2012 and 2013

The Victoria READ Society has been responding to the learning needs of children, youth and adults across Greater Victoria since it's founding in 1976. At the gracious invitation of Lieutenant Governor Steven Point, READ's 35th anniversary was wonderfully celebrated at Government House in January of 2012 with a *Family Literacy Day Game-a-thon*. His Honour welcomed children, youth and their families, READ teachers and volunteers, authors and special guests to recognize their contributions to literacy in our communities.

READ marked our 35th anniversary year by focusing on effective and efficient governance. We have now completed a technology upgrade that has vastly improved our capacity for registering, scheduling, reporting and financial management. Our teachers can spend more time teaching than manually writing reports. Our parents and volunteers can stay better informed. School Districts 61, 62 and 63 now receive our packages in



electronic formats. The full range of governance documents including our constitution, policies and by-laws have been updated and published on our new website. And our human resources policies and practice manuals are now current and effective tools for staff.

Fundraising remains an ongoing challenge. Saanich Rotary Club was our partner in October 2012 at a great event at the University Club. The Sunshine Clown Society and Mile Zero music made the event memorable as well as profitable. We are also grateful to the Ten Thousand Villages store on government Street for their generosity, dedicating 15 per cent of all sales for one-day in their pre-Christmas schedule to READ.

Plans are underway for significant fundraising in 2014.

Lease costs are second only to salaries in the READ budget. Finding and leasing space for both administration and teaching continues to be challenging. Our current Quadra Street headquarters is not wheel chair accessible. Moreover, it is proving more effective to help families cope with their transportation challenges by sending READ's teacher/volunteer teams out to key locations such as Colwood, Sidney and band offices, rather than asking them to come downtown. We call this approach *READ is on the Road*; an innovative program developed by READ in 2014.

In 2012/2013 READ worked in three teaching spaces and ten community-based outreach locations – an increase of ten locations over 2009. We are pleased to say that last year School District 62 accepted READ's proposal to be part of the proposed Neighbourhood Learning Centre, associated with the development of two new high schools; Glen Lake and Royal Bay. However, these buildings won't be complete

until 2015 and terms and conditions are still to be defined.

In October of 2013, READ said farewell to our long-term Executive Director, Claire Rettie. After seven years at the helm, Claire made the decision to pursue other opportunities to teach, consult and re-employ her many talents. The entire board offers their thanks and best wishes to Claire for her future successes.

The response to our posting of the Executive Director position was broad and enthusiastic. Over 30 applicants from across Canada responded to our advertisement. In November 2013, the READ Board of Directors was pleased to welcome Trisha Chestnutt, who has come to us with an extensive background including a Master of Arts degree in Leadership and Training, and significant experience in the Greater Victoria non-profit sector. Welcome, Trisha

– Carol Carman,
Chair

Message from the Executive Director

I wish to acknowledge and thank the Coast Salish people and the WS'ANEC' (Saanich), Lekwungen (Songhees) and Wyomilth (Esquimalt) peoples for allowing us to live and work on their traditional lands.

Change can be a challenge and a challenge is always a gift in disguise. In the past year, READ has faced many changes and challenges; we continue to provide high quality literacy and numeracy programs to children, youth and adults in the Greater Victoria region. Throughout my 34 years of living and working in Victoria, READ has been a landmark in the non-profit learning community. I am delighted to be a part of the READ Society and to be able to work with a passionate, committed and professional team, including our dedicated, resourceful and accomplished Board of Directors and Volunteers.

In 2014, READ celebrates its 38th anniversary of delivering remedial learning programs in the Greater Victoria region, to a diversity of children, youth and adults who have unique learning styles. Since 1980 READ has offered Tuition Assistance



to children and youth from low-income households. This program is funded through grant applications and fund-raising events. We also work hard to increase our numbers of fee-paying students by profiling READ as a place where service excellence and accountability are paramount.

- After-school classes are offered to children in grades K to 12 in Victoria, Sidney and the Westshore. Remedial learning focuses on strengthening students' study skills, reading, writing and mathematics
- The Noisy Kids Reading Club offers innovative approaches that combine familiar reading, new reading and word study with Reader's Theatre, family participation and educational games. Many thanks to the First Nation principals from School Districts 61 and 62.

- Digital story-telling projects, including Capturing Stories, have been very successful outreach programs to First Nations communities, linking literacy and technology at the middle school level in School Districts 61 and 62.
- Summer Learning Camps continue to be offered in various locations in the Westshore and Victoria
- READ works with GT Hiring Solutions to support job-seekers to upgrade their workplace literacy skills

READ often uses Level B diagnostic assessments to pinpoint individual strengths and learning gaps in language arts and mathematics, enabling teachers to develop individualized learning plans for each student. These assessments must be delivered by qualified Level B education professionals. READ is the only non-profit literacy organization outside of the provincial education system with the requisite qualified staff. READ is also working with the Industrial Marine Training and Applied Research Centre (IMTARC) to provide these assessments to adults wishing to take part in the shipbuilding and repair industry training being offered in Esquimalt.

Our volunteers are an essential part of READ's work, making it possible for every student to receive the personalized attention they need to become engaged, confident learners. People of goodwill can find it challenging to make the time commitment necessary to offer continuity to these young people. Through last year's Raise-a-Reader campaign, READ was paired with students from RotarAct – the student component of Rotary, and we very much hope to see more of these energetic young people involved.

None of this is possible without the dedication and hard work of READ's Board of Directors, teachers, staff and volunteers. Please see a complete list of our generous donors at readsociety.bc.ca/people/funders-partners.

Thank you, to all of our funders and supporters; our staff; our Directors; our READ families; our volunteers and the Greater Victoria community, for your powerful commitment to literacy!

– Trisha Chestnutt,
Executive Director

READ Society Operations: A Description

What We Do

- Professional teachers and program coordinators design and deliver innovative language arts and mathematics learning programs for students of all ages.
- Level B Assessors administer recognized diagnostic assessments and provide parents with comprehensive written reports. The Level B academic assessments are recognized across the provincial education system.
- Teachers have particular expertise in remedial education, targeting students who struggle with the foundation aspects of language arts and mathematics.
- READ creates small groups where students have individualized learning plans and can benefit from focused attention and learning opportunities.
- READ Board and staff collaborate with other community partners to expand services.
- READ classroom programs operate with one teacher: three students.
- READ's outreach programs operate with one teacher; two volunteers; six students.
- Board and staff collaborate with other community partners to expand services.



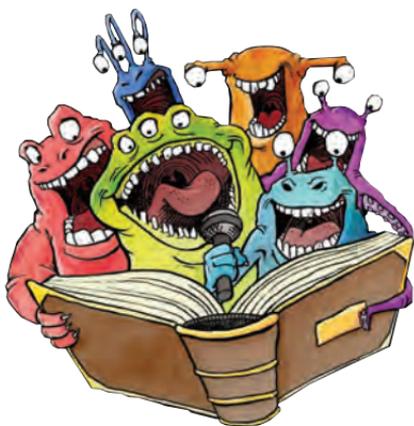
Where We Work

- In 2014, READ developed *READ is on the Road*; an innovative, literacy-based program blending the Noisy Kids Reading Club and remedial learning. *READ is on the Road* is offered across the Greater Victoria region. Teams of teachers and volunteers travel to work with children in their own environments, such as local schools or in First Nations communities. In September, 2014, READ will deliver the *READ is on the Road* program to the Pauquachin and Songhees First Nations communities .
- READ offers the Noisy Kids Reading Club in three schools in the Greater Victoria region: George Jay, Savory and Craigflower.
- Literacy and numeracy remedial classes are held at the READ headquarters in Victoria.
- Adult Essential Skills sessions are held in partnership with GT Hiring Solutions
- READ partners with the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society to provide youth literacy classes.

- READ partners with the Saanich Adult Education Centre to offer the Digital Story Telling program for adult students.



Programs and Services



Noisy Kids Reading Club

In a creative, active learning environment this program blends remedial learning using familiar reading, new reading and word study with Readers' Theatre, educational games and parent workshops. This program is for children in grades two and three who are not meeting, or who are minimally meeting expectations and are from low-income households. It is especially valuable for those who could benefit from extra literacy supports, who work well in a small group, and who enjoy being part of something special.

Key Fact: For \$65,000 per year, the Noisy Kids Reading Club served 96 children and their families in a 12-week program (36 hours).

Tuition Assistance

Tuition Assistance funding provides students from low-income households who struggle with foundational skills, with access to individualized remedial programs in language arts and mathematics. All Tuition Assistance students receive pre- and post- assessments, individualized learning plans and up to 80 hours of instruction per student over a 10-month period. Students may attend classes at one of three READ locations: Sidney, Victoria and the Westshore. Services are provided by qualified remedial teachers whose specializations include formal academic assessments as well as remedial program design and delivery.

Key Fact: \$4,000 per year provides one child with two assessments and ten months of individualized classes twice weekly.

Digital Story Telling

Capturing Stories uses media and storytelling to involve and encourage Aboriginal middle school students who are looking for hands-on learning experiences and



who enjoy being part of a team. Productions explore aspects of self, community and culture through recognized play-building techniques and filmmaking skills in lighting, photography and script writing.

The program brings Elders, family and community members into the production process through interviews and storytelling. Between November 2011 and April 2013, 69 youth have participated in the program.

Spring and Summer Camps

READ's spring and summer learning Camps are designed to create "aha" moments in a child's remedial learning process. The programs provide campers with learning strategies and tools to take home and into the classroom. Campers create a toolkit or memory box and fill it with games, hands on activities and stories linked to learning Language Arts or Mathematics.

READ is on the ROAD

In 2014, READ launches *READ is on the ROAD*; blending remedial literacy and numeracy programs with the Noisy Kids Reading Club, *READ is on the Road* will deliver on-site literacy and numeracy programs to First Nation communities in the Greater Victoria region and to communities where accessibility is limited.



Services through GT Hiring Solutions

The Essential Skills for Employment workshops at GT Hiring include an introduction to the nine Essential Skills. For the purposes of client need, some workshops focused on:

- Oral Communications
- Working with Others
- Thinking Skills
- Continuous Learning

The workshops were scheduled for four mornings in one week. One of the workshops presented was Personality Dimensions in which participants explored the four basic personality types and learned more about their own and other people's personalities. In order to practice the skills that are the focus of the program, there was considerable participant input: individually, in pairs and small groups. Groups varied from two to six people. Participants were often in their 30s or 40s, with some in



their teens and others in their 60s. Individuals reported that they enjoyed the opportunity to learn with, and from, other adults. Participants frequently mentioned that brainstorming, learning about themselves, sharing personal experiences and having the support of the instructor and other learners were highlights of the program.



Key Facts about Literacy

Decoda Literacy Solutions and Statistics Canada provide statistics on literacy issues and literacy rates in BC and Canada. The following are some key statistics in the province of BC.

Literacy and Families

- Reading to children before they start school helps develop their language skills and their interest in reading and learning in general.
- The children of parents with higher education levels have higher literacy levels, and much of the benefit comes with high school graduation.

Literacy and Adults/Seniors

- 40% of BC adults do not have the necessary skills to read a newspaper, fill out a work application form, read a map, or understand a lease.
- 49% of BC adults do not have the necessary skills to calculate a tip, create a budget, calculate sales tax, or understand credit card interest rates.
- In BC, 70% of adults over 65 score in the lowest two prose reading proficiency levels; 78% score in the lowest two numeracy proficiency levels.
- On average, seniors have lower literacy skills and less prior education than other Canadians.

Literacy and Children and Youth/ High School Graduation Rates

- In BC, one in four children is “developmentally vulnerable” when beginning kindergarten and one student in five is not completing high school in the expected time.

- Almost four in ten youths aged 15 have insufficient reading skills.
- In 2008, 20% of Canadian teenagers aged 15-19 were no longer pursuing a formal education.
- The Canadian Government will spend \$2,500.00 on employment insurance and \$4,000.00 on social assistance annually for each high school drop-out, for a total annual cost of 2.4 billion dollars.
- Aboriginal students make up 10% or more of the school population in many school districts.
- School completion rates for Aboriginal people remains below 50%, compared to 79% for the general student population .

Literacy and the Community

- Currently, there are 102 community literacy task groups and Literacy Outreach Coordinators representing more than 400 communities across the province. They think, plan, and take action to ensure literacy development for all community members.



Literacy Statistics as of 2011

- 2,002 people from school districts, colleges, health care service providers, employment agencies, business, justice, libraries and community service organizations participated in task groups and related meetings.
- 572 new literacy initiatives and 748 expanded and continuing literacy programs were supported.
- 1,673 community organizations collaborated to deliver literacy initiatives.
- 19,114 adults participated in community adult literacy programs.
- 59,838 children and adults attended community family literacy programs.
- 10,981 school-aged children participated in community programs designed to support their learning.



- 2,623 youth participated in community programs designed for their literacy development.
- 2,718 seniors attended community literacy programs that assist them to keep up-to date and connected.
- 51,123 children and adults attended community literacy events.
- 7,297 workshops and seminars on literacy were presented.
- \$5,693,171 in grants, fund-raising and in-kind support was locally contributed to community literacy work, almost doubling the \$2,872,999 provided in provincial grants.

Literacy and Health

- Thirty percent of those with high literacy say they have excellent health, compared to 19% of those with low literacy.
- Researchers estimate that 3-5% of total health care costs are due to limited understanding about health information. This translates into \$680 million each year in British Columbia.

Literacy and Poverty

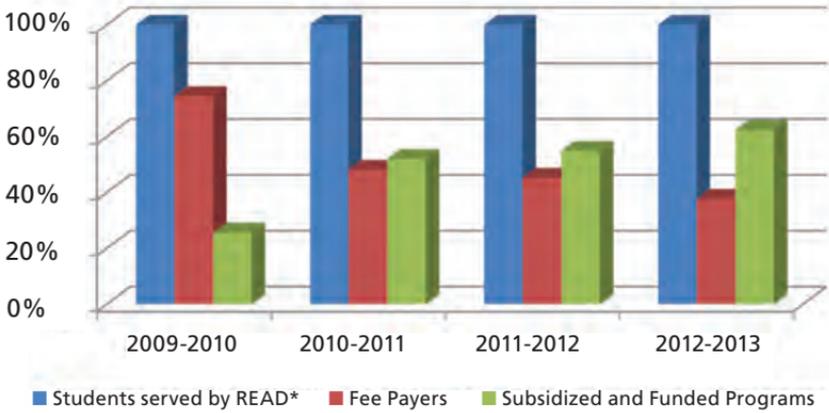
- Based on the latest figures from Statistics Canada (2010), BC had an overall poverty rate of 15.5%, the worst rate of any province, based on before-tax low income cut-offs. (First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition).
- The demographic groups more likely to experience poverty than the general population are single mothers with young children, people of Aboriginal ancestry, recent immigrants and refugees, and people with disabilities, mental illness or addictions.
- In 2010, BC had the second highest rate of child poverty of any province (119,000 children living in poverty). The previous eight years, it had the highest child poverty rate of any province).
- In 2010, 43 percent of the poor children in BC lived in families with at least one adult working full-time).



Literacy and Justice Issues

- Offenders are three times as likely as the rest of the population to have literacy problems.
- 79% of male Canadian inmates lack a high school diploma, as do 71% of female inmates.
- Among male offenders aged 18-24, 55% had not completed Grade 10, and 19% had not completed Grade 8; among male offenders 25 or older, 49% had not completed Grade 10, and 21% had not completed Grade 8).
- 70% of inmates tested at lower than a grade 8 literacy level.
- Thirty-six percent of offenders have not completed grade 9.
- Inmates who attend basic education classes are 30% less likely to re-offend.
- In 2004, the average cost to keep an offender behind bars for a year was more than \$53,000.00.

Students Served by READ



Facts About READ Students

- In 2009-2010 READ served 235 students. This included 24 adult students and 60 Tuition Assistance students.
- In 2010-2011 READ served 281 students, including Eight Adult students, 77 Tuition Assistance students and 69 Noisy Kids Reading Club students.
- In 2011-2012 READ served 228 students, this included seven Adult students, 83 Tuition Assistance students, 17 Noisy Kids Reading Club students and 25 Capturing Stories students.
- In 2012-2013 READ served 316 students this included 12 Adult students, 59 Tuition Assistance students, 89 Noisy Kids Reading Club students and 49 Capturing Stories students.

READ in the Community – Special Activities



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Elaine Hays, Director,
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Avrille Gosling, Director
Steve Newton, Director
Phil Wynne, Director, Facilities

STAFF

Claire Rettie,
Executive Director
[until October, 2013]
Tracey Childerhose,
Finance Manager
Tammy Moore, Child and
Youth Program Coordinator
Kim Carver, Student
Services Administrator
Dano Underwood,
Capturing Stories
Trisha Chestnutt,
Executive Director
[from November, 2013]

TEACHERS

Ross Banister
Jan Beckett
Tess Kidd
Janie Harrison
Carla MacRae
Terri Shortill
Helen Thomas
Amie Jamin
Teresa Havers

Matthew Heim
Tania Singh
Jill Kissick

TEACHERS ON CALL

Tricia Wautier
Susan Dew-Jones
Jillian Thibeau Langille
Paula Banbury
Mike St. Claire
Michelle Aunger
Kate Goodwin
Joshua Barry

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Resolve IT Consulting
Computer Technician
Thomas Jone,
ACCESS Database

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Nazmudin Rayani
Claire Rettie
Elinor Rhynas
John Rhynas
Carol Richardson
Krycia Strawczynski
Phil Wynne

LITERACY PATRON

Anonymous
Angus and Jenny Izard
David J Leishman

LITERACY LEADER

Angus and Jenny Izard

PROGRAM AND PROJECT PARTNERS

School District 61 and 62
Coast Capital Savings
Foundation
Decoda Literacy Solutions
Intact Foundation
TELUS Foundation
Times-Colonist Raise a Reader
United Way of Greater Victoria
Victoria Foundation
Zonta Club of Victoria

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Booster Club
Nora Francis

PROGRAM SPONSORS



Administrative office and mailing address

202 - 990 Hillside Avenue
Victoria, BC V8T 2E1

Tel: 250-388-7225

Fax: 250-386-8330

Email: info@readsociety.bc.ca

Remedial learning locations

202 - 990 Hillside Avenue
Victoria, BC V8T 2E1

T302B - 9775 Fourth Street
Sidney, BC V8L 2Z8

345 Wale Road
Victoria, BC V9B 6X2

