

Canadian Special Interest Group on Literacy



CSIG-L Newsletter

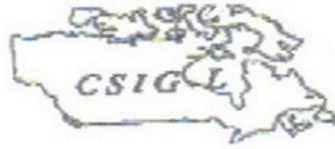
October 2013

September: Back to School



**CSIG-L SENDS A BOUQUET TO ALL OUR GREAT MEMBERS AND
CONGRATULATES THEM ON THE FINE JOB THEY DO ON THEIR LITERACY EFFORTS!**

Canadian Special Interest Group on Literacy



Our Chairperson also has a busy schedule, however, she would certainly want us to greet you for her and wish you a wonderful school year.

Canadian Special Interest Group on Literacy



CSIG-L Executive Members

Chairperson: SANDRA QUAYLE

squayle@srsd119.ca



Past chairperson: Carol Hryniuk Adamov

Treasurer: Diane Beetam

Membership: Dorothy H. Morrow

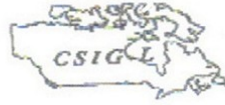
Assistant Editor: JoAnne Paden

Newsletter Editor: Dorothy H. Morrow - morrow83@bell.net

September is an extremely busy month for our members. I remember clearly!
We have not had much input from our members for inclusion in this newsletter and we are sure that this
has been a contributing factor.

Please understand if you had something to contribute and we did not have time to wait.

Editor's note.



Honey Halpern in Africa

HONEY HALPERN AND LINDA ROBERTS, A++ VOLUNTEERS !

***Stand Tall** will never forget these two wonderful volunteers. Their enthusiasm and dedication extended beyond their areas of expertise and they accomplished more than we ever expected.*



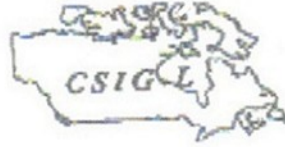
Honey's specialties are literacy and child-centered teaching techniques. She worked with our teachers on both the philosophy behind these techniques and their practical applications. The teachers responded very favorably; each one of them prepared a class that incorporated child centered teaching strategies. Honey was very pleased with the results and the teachers benefited greatly from this=hands on experience. Honey also organized a class-by-class book lending system, so, for the first time, students can check out books overnight. She was also instrumental in getting shelves built in each classroom so the students will have somewhere to put their bags and belongings. No more messy tables!

Read more about Honey's experiences in Uganda and at Stand Tall in her informative and entertaining blog. www.eastafricandiary.wordpress.com

Linda is an organizational wonder. She worked mostly in the office with the administrative staff – they formalized important school policies by first identifying them and then recording them, and distributing them to staff; they worked on time management techniques and Linda also prepared a grant template for future grant applications. Linda was also the chief organizer of the Rose Charities Conference and its success is a testament to her abilities.

CSIG-L congratulates these two volunteers on a great job! WE are proud of them and thank them for their contributions to Global Literacy.

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WE WON!

Stand Tall Training Centre won the top global prize in the Developing Nations category in the 2012 School Enterprise Challenge competition. This competition was sponsored by Teach a Man To Fish, an organization based in the UK that promotes sustainable education and believes in inspiring and rewarding the next generation of entrepreneurs. In 2011 they launched the School Enterprise Challenge to encourage schools across the world to set up student run school-based enterprises, and spread the word that education really can pay for itself!

<http://www.teachamantofish.org.uk/about-us>.

Our prize money will be used to buy a cow and the milk will supplement our nutritional program; we will also buy some much needed audio visual equipment and perhaps a goat to act as mate for the one we already have. Our learners, with the guidance of their teachers, created a business plan that garnered them the top prize in the Developing Countries category. Stand Tall won this prize for the chicken-rearing program. The students rear the chickens from baby chicks, make the feed for the chickens at different stages of their development, sell the eggs and eventually the mature chickens. Profits realized from this venture are used to buy more baby chickens and the process starts all over.

Thanks to the STAND TALL newsletter sent by Honey Halpern
– a valued CSIG-L member



About Margriet



Margriet Ruurs writes children's books and educational materials. She has a Master's Degree in Education from Simon Fraser University and has studied the use of technology in teaching reading and writing to children. "I love to use my imagination and to dream up stories", says this creator of many books for children.

Margriet also loves to work in schools – to tell children about being a writer and to share her love of playing with language. Her favorite genre of writing is poetry and she likes to make silly rhymes!

Margriet, her husband and two sons have lived in many places – including California, Oregon, Alberta, British Columbia and the Yukon. They like hiking and camping in the mountains and traveling. Once they traveled for a whole year!

Margriet conducts author visits to international schools around the world but she also loves to stay home to write new books. When she is not traveling Margriet lives on Salt Spring Island, B.C. where she runs Booklovers' Bed & Breakfast (see www.betweencoversbandb.com).

Margriet is editor of **KIDSWWRITE**, a web magazine that publishes writing by children: www.kalwriters.com/kidswwrite.

[Click here](#) to download and print an information sheet about Margriet Ruurs.

To watch a short interview and clip of Margriet in action during a school presentation, watch this video:

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Used with permission from Vancouver International Writers Festival.

"Full-day kindergarten gives kids huge step up, study shows"

By~ Louise Brown, Toronto Star

September 3, 2013

Champions of full-day kindergarten across Canada are elated at new research that suggests children who have been in Ontario's new full-day program for two years are dramatically better prepared — two to four times more — than others in their ability to reason and communicate, get along with others and in general knowledge.

The study of nearly 700 Grade 1 children conducted by Queen's and McMaster universities has prompted excitement from proponents. Educator Charles Pascal, who designed Ontario's full-day learning program, said he's doing cartwheels; early childhood advocate Margaret McCain said "it's like winning Olympic gold."

"After 15 years of pushing the importance of early learning, this is the strongest proof we've had to show that it works — it's very exciting for policy makers across the country," said McCain, co-author of a landmark [report on early learning](#) with Dr. Fraser Mustard.

The new research was released Tuesday by Ontario Education Minister Liz Sandals, who called it "nothing short of incredible."

It shows children who attended both junior and senior kindergarten all day were stronger in almost all basic learning skills by Grade 1 than those who had only one year in full-day learning or didn't go to full-day at all.

"We always predicted that a play-based full-day program could improve kids' readiness to learn, but it's great to have solid research that shows what you had hoped to achieve has happened," Sandals said of the two-year study. She said also showed the benefits of having early childhood educators involved, "to take advantage of their play-based experience."

Now in the fourth year of being phased in, the full-day kindergarten program has sparked [concerns](#) about lack of space and funding and its impact on the demand for child care.

Still, Pascal said, this research on how full-day kindergarten boosts learning “is huge; it shows the program is truly a life-changer. It’s cartwheel time for all those early learning educators who are making such a huge difference in the lives of so many children.”

The study tracked the skills of 693 Grade 1 pupils from 125 schools in every region of the province, once the program began in 2010. Roughly one-third had been in full-day learning for both junior and senior kindergarten, one-third only for senior kindergarten, and one-third not at all.

As they entered Grade 1, only 4.3 per cent of those in full-day learning for both years appeared to be at risk of not doing well because of weak language skills or poor cognitive development, compared with 14.8 per cent of those with just one year of full-day learning, and 16.4 per cent of those with no full-day learning.

Similarly, only 5.2 per cent of children with two years of full-day kindergarten showed weak social skills, compared with 7.7 per cent of children with one year of the program and 10.5 per cent of children with no full-day experience at all.

With respect to general knowledge and communication, only 5.6 per cent of children with two years in full-day kindergarten were at risk, compared with 7.7 per cent of those with one year of full-day kindergarten and 10.5 per cent of those with no full-day learning at all.

MPP Lisa MacLeod, education critic for the provincial Progressive Conservatives, noted the government has not released the full study, which she said the public needs “to make sure we are getting the best value for our dollar.

“In order for the government to have any credibility on this,” she said, “they should have allowed a third party to do the study and a third party to release it, warts and all.”

With files from Kristin Rushowy



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Full-day kindergarten gives kids huge step up, study shows

The preceding article was posted in the Toronto Star in September of this year. It would seem quite reasonable to believe that there are advantages to the full day Kindergarten programs that are being phased in throughout the province of Ontario, but I am skeptical regarding the validity of this particular study. First, I feel that it may be too early to draw any conclusions concerning the scores, seeing as some of the children who were surveyed/tested had been enrolled in just one year of the program. In my opinion, data would prove more meaningful if more students had been tested and compared over a greater number of years. (This was just a two year study). Second, I take issue with testing children at the beginning of...rather than the end of Grade 1. This is because the Ministry's curriculum expectations of where a student should be by the end of Grade 1 are more clearly laid out in our curriculum documents...compared to the expectations that are set for the end of Senior Kindergarten. Also, I suspect that this study used the EDI, which is a UNESCO -reviewed measurement of early childhood education development...Why would the researchers not refer to/measure against the expectations, and the guidelines for assessment and evaluation that are clearly laid out in the province's own curriculum documents? In addition, I question how social skills were measured and compared. Also, what does "at risk" mean/refer to (in quantitative and qualitative measures) in the various categories? I would also like to see how literacy skills were measured, and have an opportunity to look at concrete data. Also, I question what type of communication skills they are referring to in the study. Are they talking about oral language or written expression...? Hopefully, more light will be shed on this study in the future. After all is said and done, I feel that the statistics that came from this study are just too general...and that it would have been best to wait until the province had a few more years of the program under its belt.

Yours in education! :)

JoAnne

**JoAnne speaks as a former kindergarten teacher and retired Principal in Ontario.
Bravo!**

Canadian Special Interest Group on Literacy



Membership Form

We welcome you for the first time or we welcome you back as a returning member to our Canadian Special Interest Group on Literacy.

Our year extends from May to May.

We recognize that this makes it difficult for some members, for whom Fall brings many changes.

But for those members who are able, we encourage you to renew your membership before the first of June

because that is when we must submit our membership report to the International Reading Association.

Our presentation time at the IRA conference in the following year depends on our membership numbers in June.

Canadian Special Interest Group on Literacy

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Postal/Zip Code: _____

Email Address: _____

Send Electronically: Yes _____ **/No** _____ **IRA#** _____

Membership Fee \$10.00

Mail to: Dorothy H. Morrow, Box 3172, Prince Albert, Ontario, L9L 1C2