

VICTORIA ANNUAL REPORT 2002-2003 READ SOCIETY



The Victoria READ Society was founded in October of 1976. We believe that everyone has the basic right to literacy skills. Our mandate is to teach reading, writing, math and English language skills to people of all ages who have found that their learning difficulties have prevented them from succeeding in school or the workplace or kept them from fully participating in the community.

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 244 children and 126 adults learn literacy, language and numeracy skills. For over 25 years, the teachers at the READ Society have been helping people learn these skills. Time and again, every member of the board has heard testimonials about the quality and effectiveness of READ's teachers from parents, grandparents, students and schoolteachers. They have told us how READ teachers through their knowledge, abilities, dedication and warmth have changed people's lives.

One of the characteristics that distinguishes READ is that we offer bursaries for children whose families cannot fully afford to pay fees. This year 43 bursaries were awarded. These bursaries are made possible by donations from individuals, firms and foundations and we are grateful for their contributions. Another source of bursary funds is the READ poetry festival held each spring. Some of Victoria's finest poets and Shelagh Rogers of the CBC together gave the audience a wonderful evening. We very much appreciate their volunteering to support READ in this way.

Over the past year, the board and executive director have been charting a future course for the



READ Society. We want to increase the number of children to whom we can offer bursaries and we want to further secure the long-term financial viability of the Society. One of the steps we took to achieve both these objectives was to establish the Victoria READ Society Fund for Literacy as an endowment fund with the Victoria Foundation. A donor who wishes to remain anonymous made our first payment into this fund possible.

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.

KRYSLIA STRAWCZYNSKI
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

These days I think every non-profit organization's annual report could start with the words "2002-2003 was a challenging year"!

Non-profit organizations have always faced significant challenges – the increasing demands for service that outpace the supply of resources available, the stresses of working in a field that can be emotionally draining as well as rewarding, retaining talented, professional staff who may be tempted by employment in more lucrative sectors...just to name a few!

So why do we do the work we do? Despite all the challenges, we saw staff arguing at our last Annual General Meeting, each claiming to have the best job! READ's teachers, support staff and volunteers are focused on and dedicated to helping students learn. The rewards are in knowing



that you have helped someone learn new skills, gain confidence and make positive life changes. Those changes can have an impact not only on individuals' lives, but also on their families and communities. That is what keeps us going when the going gets tough.

In Greater Victoria, many non-profit organizations have been affected directly or indirectly by funding cuts to social programs. The Victoria READ Society has been more fortunate than many. We have managed to maintain provincial funding for our English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) program for another year. Our Adult Basic Skills (ABS) program funding was cut at the end of June due to changes in the mandate of the Ministry of Human Resources. However, the program has been reborn as Basic Academic Skills for Employment (BASE) and funded in a different way. We are optimistic that the Ministry of Children and Family Development will continue to sponsor children in their foster care program to attend our individualized remedial programs. Human Resources Development Canada once again provided funding under the Summer Career Placement Program to enable us to hire a student to assist us with administrative projects.

Indirectly, cuts to other non-profit organizations and social programs have affected us by directly

affecting our students. It has been challenging for our teachers to limit their support to teaching when their students are often facing difficult issues in other areas of their lives. READ has provided counselling, information and referrals - even food and clothing - whenever it can, but our resources, and our mandate in these areas, are limited.

There are many worthy causes in our community. However, we are finding that as government support is decreasing, there is more competition for each donated dollar. READ received a grant from Partners in Organizational Development (POD) last year to develop a communications and fundraising plan. We worked with a volunteer communications consultant and a local communications company to develop a strategy to help us raise awareness, our profile and our funding. READ depends on individuals, foundations and corporate sponsors to support its Bursary Fund for children to attend our remedial programs, and to provide other operational support. We are grateful to them for recognizing the importance of literacy and the value of READ's services.

I would like to thank our Board of Directors, especially our Chair, Krysia Strawczynski. The board provides leadership, moral and financial support, advice and

expertise, and many volunteer hours to READ.

And finally a word to the teachers, support staff and volunteers: I would like to thank you all for the past year - for the excellent work you do and the professional, respectful, caring way you do it. The people who come to READ for learning, support and resources are fortunate to have you in their corner.

JULIE HOLDER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



THE KEY PROGRAM

The KEY program has been providing academic assessment and individualized help in reading, writing, math and study skills, since READ was born in 1976. While the KEY program's focus is on teaching children and youth, we have also provided assistance to adults when needed. The KEY program is funded through fee-for-service and the Bursary Program.



Our 2002 summer program began in July and for the first time we offered summer camps along with our more structured summer classes. Fifty-one students attended our regular classes and 27 children participated in three camps offering learning in a fun and informal environment.

“We are fortunate to have your program for our children. We have all benefited from your being available in our community.”

– Parent

Our regular program coincided with the school year, starting in September. By the end of June 2003, we had served 244 students in total - an increase of 8.5% over the previous year. Classes were offered in three locations in Victoria, Saanich and Sidney. A big change for our Saanich-based KEY program was our move from the McKenzie Street office to new digs at 3440 Douglas Street at the end of October. The new space is wonderful with excellent accessibility and a bright and welcoming atmosphere.



The improvement in my son's attitude toward reading exceeds even my greatest hopes and we are very grateful to [his teacher] for that!”

– Parent

Last spring we received funding from the Enterprising Non-Profits Program to hire an MBA co-op student from the University of Victoria to conduct a market study and make recommendations about how we could improve and expand our services. At year-end the Board was reviewing and prioritizing recommendations from the study. In June, we sent out a survey to parents of KEY students to get a sense of how our services were received. The results were overwhelmingly positive.

JANIE HARRISON
KEY COORDINATOR

“[Our son] is much more confident and often chooses to read before other activities.”

– Parent

THE BURSARY FUND

At the Victoria READ Society, we believe that everyone has the basic right to literacy skills. One of READ's goals is to provide hourly remedial classes to school-aged children, regardless of ability to pay tuition. The READ Bursary Fund was established over 20 years ago so that children whose families could not afford the full cost of tuition, could access extra-curricular academic instruction. This year, Bursary allocations of \$68,121 made it possible for 43 students from lower income families to improve their literacy skills with individualized instruction from READ's professional teachers. Each student on bursary benefits from ten months of individualized classes in language arts or mathematics.

While the number of bursaries available this year increased over 100% from the previous year, there were still 37 children on the waitlist for funding at year-end. The number of requests we receive for bursary increases steadily each year.

READ is committed to meeting the annual fundraising challenge in order to continue providing this invaluable educational opportunity for children who struggle to learn. We are grateful for the support of the individuals, corporations and Service Clubs listed in this annual report. In particular, we wish to acknowledge and thank the following for their ongoing generosity: Provincial Employees Community Services Fund, The Vancouver Foundation, The RBC Foundation, The Times Colonist, and the BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch.

VICKY AUSTIN
BURSARY MANAGER

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICES FOR ADULTS (ELSA)

READ has been offering English as a Second Language services since 1990. Our current ELSA program is funded through the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. ELSA's mandate is to facilitate the integration of new Canadians into Canadian culture, community and the workplace.

In 2002-2003, the ELSA Program provided 3 levels of English language instruction to 68 students over a period of nine months. Level 1 also included literacy upgrading for 5 students. Last year, 21 students completed Level 1, 12 completed Level 2 and



13 completed Level 3. Twenty-one students found employment during the program. Some of our last year's students will join us again in September.

Students came from all over the world: Argentina, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Kosova, Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, Panama, Romania, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Viet Nam. Students came to Canada as

refugees, independent immigrants, family class immigrants and entrepreneurs. All wanted help in adapting to life in Canada, learning English and finding work.

During their time at READ, students learned English vocabulary, grammar and idioms. They listened to English speakers, wrote stories in English, read stories about Canada and famous Canadians, ate new foods, laughed and sang songs - and they talked and talked and talked!

Student evaluations of the program showed that they found the classes interesting, fun and useful. They said they would tell their friends being at READ was "like being with your family", "feeling safe", "learning about Canada and Victoria" and "a good place to learn English."

ELSA and ABS students received a real boost with a generous donation of brand new computers and printers from IBM Canada. Both programs use the computers for practicing their literacy and communications skills and doing research on the Internet. In this ever-changing world of technology, this state-of-the-art equipment has proven invaluable!

Thank you to this year's staff for their enthusiasm, willingness and hard work! A job well done by all!

DONNA LAMBERT
ELSA PROGRAM COORDINATOR

THE ADULT BASIC SKILLS (ABS) PROGRAM

The Adult Basic Skills program has been providing basic literacy and numeracy skills for adults in our community for 17 years. We received funding for this program from the Ministry of Human Resources and provided service to approximately 58 adults between the ages of 18 and 55.

It has been a great experience for me being at Adult Basic Skills. It has given me confidence in myself. I am happy that I can read and write again, plus I am doing well in math. I recommend other people take this course. You will not regret it. You will be happy you did come here."

— Patricia Jimmy, ABS Student

In addition to their regular studies, students had the opportunity to complete a FoodSafe Certificate, St. John's First Aid and a Resident Manager workshop this past year.



These courses will be helpful to students in their future job search.

One of the most interesting developments this year was the increase in the joint planning of learning activities for ABS and ELSA students. Both classes went to Goldstream to see the salmon run in November and the eagles in January. We had a wonderful craft day making Dreamcatchers and bead jewelry led by one of our students and her mother. A kite-making workshop was facilitated by one of our volunteer tutors. Each of these events provided a wonderful opportunity for our students to share learning with people from other cultures and parts of the world.

Our move to a new location on Douglas Street was a very positive and revitalizing event for both the staff and students. We now have two bright, spacious classrooms and the use of three other smaller rooms for tutoring. It is well serviced by major bus routes which our students really



appreciate. We also have easy access to the Galloping Goose trail and have encouraged our students to join our walking club to improve our fitness levels.

To celebrate the opening of this new office, the staff at the Douglas location held an Open House in January 2003. This was well attended by representatives of municipal and provincial governments, community groups, current and former READ staff, volunteers and board members.

Although funding continues to be an ongoing issue for this program, we are confident that Adult Basic Skills will continue to provide that critical first step for adults who need to improve their basic academic skills in order to be better prepared for Victoria's very challenging job market.

DEBBIE-BOOTH JOHNSON
ABS COORDINATOR

READ festival

2003

READ's 12th annual festival of poetry was held on April 25th. We were pleased once again to welcome CBC Radio host Shelagh Rogers as our Master of Ceremonies for the evening's performance at the Alix Goolden Hall.

We were privileged that some of the finest poets in Canada donated their time and shared their talents: (as pictured below L-R) Rhona McAdam, Peter Trower, Patrick Friesen, Wendy Morton, Carla Funk, Patrick Lane, Lorna Crozier, Terence Young, Ameris (student poet), Patricia Young, Ellen Szita, with MC Shelagh Rogers. Our three young READ student poets – Ameris, Hayden and Mohsen - read and "rapped" with great confidence and enthusiasm.

The READ Festival Committee devoted many hours throughout the year to planning and delivering an entertaining performance that would celebrate the magic of words through poetry and, ultimately, raise money for the

READ Bursary Fund. READ staff, board members and volunteers all contributed to the success of this event. We owe a debt of gratitude to our loyal audiences who have supported us throughout the twelve annual Festivals. We gratefully acknowledge the generous financial and in-kind support of our sponsors noted in this annual report. We mention in particular our LEAD Sponsors for Festival 2003: Times Colonist and Coast Capital Savings Foundation.

VICKY AUSTIN
FESTIVAL 2003 CHAIR





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

VOLUNTEERS

The Victoria READ Society relies on the commitment and support of volunteers. We are governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Volunteers tutor Adult Basic Skills (ABS) and English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) students who need one-to-one help in addition to their classroom time. Volunteers put literacy into action at the annual READ Festival. Volunteers

help with Bingo shifts, special events, office assistance and newsletter mailings. READ has benefited from the expertise of volunteer advisors and consultants.

READ acknowledges these volunteers who, along with staff, have shared their time, talent and treasures.

Thank you!

Mike Brodsky
Sukru Elgin
Gail Flitton
Aisling Goodman
Anne Goodman
Ross Grant
Darryl Hooker
Sarah Hudson
Suzanne Ives

Mohsen Kheari
Dan Kostka
Sheila Leigh
Martha Leithwood
Lauréanne Lepage
Vivian McFarlane
Hank Mathias
Ian McKinnon
Wendy Morton

Holly O'Neil
Ray Parks
Carole Pendray
Elinor Rhynas
Hayden Sager
Jed Simpson
Joan Simpson
Jordan Simpson
Stacie Smithson

Caroline Startin
Nicholas Vaartnou
Peter Vaartnou
Ameris Whitson
Ron Willems
Leland Wong
and ELSA students -
Anna, Ali, Farid, Hadish,
Harjinder, Helen, Hong

READ FESTIVAL 2003 SPONSORS AND DONORS

Advanced Book
Exchange Inc.
BC Hydro
Canada Instant Print Ltd.
Carevest Capital Inc.
CBC Radio
Coast Capital Savings
Foundation
GardenWorks
Golda's Finest Foods Inc.
Mocambo Coffee
Monk Office Supply Ltd.
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Sierra Systems Group Inc.
Tanners Books
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Times Colonist

Victoria School of Writing
Wille Dodge Chrysler
Lorna Crozier
Patrick Friesen
Carla Funk
Patrick Lane
Isabel Mathias
Hank Mathias
Rhona McAdam
Janet Mathews
Wendy Morton
Elinor Rhynas
Shelagh Rogers
Peter Trower
Patricia Young
Terence Young

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ministry for Children
and Family Development
Ministry of Community,
Aboriginal and Womens'
Services
Ministry of Human
Resources
Human Resources
Development Canada

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Ability Plus Employment
Services
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Mildred Mossop Unit,
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Mustard Seed Food Bank
Oak Bay United
Fellowship Club
Pacific Gateway International
College of Canada
Partners in Organizational
Development²
Provincial Employees
Community Services Fund

¹ VanCity Foundation; Vancouver Foundation; United Way of the Lower Mainland

² United Way of the Lower Mainland, BC Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, City of Vancouver - Social Planning Department, and Vancouver Foundation.

RBC Foundation	Donna deBruin	Margaret Ransford	National Literacy Secretariat
Rotary Anns of Greater Victoria	Wendy Donawa	Katharine Ratcliffe	International Reading Association
Rotary Club of Oak Bay	Judith Forman	Noël Richardson	Camosun Advisory Committee
Soroptimist International of Greater Victoria	Myrna Hall	Carole Sabiston	ASPECT (Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training)
Starbucks Coffee	Mary Hess	Christine Scotnicki	VEAN (Victoria Employment Agency Network)
Times-Colonist Book Drive Disbursement Fund	Julie Holder	Caroline Startin	ELSA-Net
Vancouver Foundation	Stephanie & Terry Holmes	Patti Stockton	TEAL (Teachers of English as an Additional Language)
Zonta Club of Victoria	Myer Horowitz	Krysia Srawczynski	Community Social Planning Council
Rosalyn & Gordon Alexander	Bev Horsman	Helen Thomas	
Alison Armstrong	Pat Javorski	Michael Torontow	
Melanie Austin	Ruth Keogh	Cindy Vaartnou	
Vicky Austin	Susan Link	Peter Vaartnou	
Darlene Bailey	Miriam McPhail	Dorothy Williamson	
Jan Beckett	Linda McConnan	JoAnn Zelen	
Peter Beliveau	Don McKay	Jan Zwicky	
Debbie Booth-Johnston	Ellie McManus		
Shirley Brand	Sarjit Manhas	PARTNERS	
Audrey Carter	Shurley Mazerolle	The Victoria READ Society is affiliated with and/or a member of:	
	Norma Mickelson	Literacy BC	
	P.K. Page	ABC Canada	
	Linda Petch		
	Margot Pratt		

VICTORIA READ SOCIETY 2002-2003

BOARD OF DIRECTORS	STAFF	KEY PROGRAM	ADULT BASIC SKILLS (ABS) PROGRAM
Krysia Strawczynski, <i>Chair</i>	ADMINISTRATION	Janie Harrison & Ann Hietkamp <i>Program Coordinators</i>	Debbie Booth-Johnson <i>Program Coordinator</i>
Myrna Hall, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Julie Holder, <i>Executive Director</i>	Lisa Cartwright	Judy Forman
Susan Link, <i>Treasurer</i>	Linda McConnan, <i>Financial Officer</i>	Hatty Copus	Michelle Harkness
Ellen Szita, <i>Secretary</i>	Vicky Austin, <i>Bursary Manager</i>	Karen Hedquist	Janie Harrison
Sarjit Manhas	Diane Carson, <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	Pat Javorski	Helen Thomas
Norma Mickelson	Mieke Larsen, <i>Accounts Receivable</i>	Amanda Johnson	Greta Vander Wekken
Linda Petch	Jennifer Zacharias, <i>Office Assistant</i>	Ann Kingerlee	
Patti Stockton		Sheila Leigh	ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICES FOR ADULTS (ELSA)
Jo-Ann Zelen		Robyn Mor	Donna Lambert <i>Program Coordinator</i>
		Margaret Ransford	Jan Beckett
		Liz Stannard	Ai Linh Trinh
		Willa Sutherland	Cindy Vaartnou
		Greta Vander Wekken	
		Tanya Wharton	

**VICTORIA READ SOCIETY
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS (UNAUDITED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2003**

	GENERAL FUND		BURSARY FUND	
	2003	2002	2003	2002
REVENUES				
Program grants	\$498,917	\$471,719	\$ -	\$ -
Tuition				
General	196,674	244,283	-	-
Bursaries	68,121	24,222	-	-
Donations	28,050	30,231	48,332	43,660
Gaming	-	-	43,460	21,562
Assessments	10,295	10,507	-	-
Read Festival (Note 6)	-	-	12,309	6,092
Canadian Employment Project				
Adult Basic Skills	9,700	43,886	-	-
Other grants	9,500	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	3,089	940	-	-
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	824,346	825,788	104,101	71,314
EXPENSES				
Salaries and employee benefits	645,385	618,524	-	21,193
Bursaries	-	-	65,741	22,127
Assessments	-	-	2,380	2,095
Rent	38,460	42,855	-	-
Office & Supplies	22,060	22,373	-	-
Advertising	16,849	8,295	-	-
Client support costs	14,783	15,154	-	-
Repairs and maintenance	14,190	13,667	-	-
Amortization	13,913	6,474	-	-
Telephone and utilities	12,439	12,762	-	-
Equipment rental	10,179	10,849	-	-
Educational materials	5,464	7,319	-	-
Educational development	4,075	1,650	-	-
Professional fees	3,270	8,389	-	-
Interest and bank charges	2,857	4,932	-	-
Insurance and bonding fees	2,145	5,151	-	-
Transportation and travel	1,324	565	-	-
Bad debts	920	2,316	-	-
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	808,313	781,275	68,121	45,415
NET EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$16,033	\$44,513	\$35,980	\$25,899



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No. S 12,762