

Literacy Promotion Awards 2016

As part of International Literacy Day, the Tri-County Literacy Network recognizes individuals' contributions to literacy in the tri-county area of Chatham-Kent, Sarnia-Lambton and Windsor-Essex. On an annual basis one individual from each county or municipality is recognized for his/her promotion of literacy.

Chatham-Kent Recipient:

Recipient of the Literacy Promotion Award 2016 for Chatham-Kent

This year, in Chatham-Kent, we would like to recognize the contributions of **Margaret Schleier Stahl**.

Margaret Schleier Stahl has mentored, motivated and facilitated numerous clients of Ontario Works to commence, re-enroll, or continue their education with the Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) Adult upgrading program.

She has piloted and led a workshop in conjunction with LKDSB on a weekly basis where she assists clients to access the required supports for their educational success. She provides access to Educational funding, daycare, travel and employment supports, on site and in a timely manner for these students so that their barriers to Literacy and Education are eliminated.

Margaret has compassionately facilitated the continuation of the adult students with her support. From its beginnings, Margaret has grown the Learning Lab program for Ontario Works and therefore supported the ongoing success of the Adult Upgrading program of the LKDSB by showcasing students' individual efforts and achievements. Attendance for the program has increased due to her efforts.

A recent successful participant of the program directly attributes their success to their first meeting with Margaret and the support and encouragement received.

Sarnia-Lambton Recipient:

Recipient of the Literacy Promotion Award 2016 for Sarnia-Lambton

This year, in Sarnia-Lambton, we would like to recognize the contributions of **Pat Bennett**.

Organization for Literacy in Lambton (OLL) would like to nominate Pat Bennett for the Tri-County Literacy Network Literacy and Learning Promotion Award in Sarnia-Lambton. Pat has been involved in literacy and learning, as an adult learner, in the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program, at OLL. Pat began programming with OLL in 2011. He came to OLL to improve his reading and writing skills. Since 2011, Pat has worked diligently, on a weekly basis, with an Instructor, in a one-to-one setting.

Pat was initially assessed by OLL staff to read at a Level 2 and write at a Level 1. Pat has worked extremely hard to improve his reading and writing skills. While attending OLL, he has also been commuting to Fanshawe College to complete the Automotive Service Technician program there. On top of completing college-level courses, tutoring at OLL, and being a husband and a father of young children, he also worked in Sarnia. Pat recently completed his final course at Fanshawe College; he graduated with a 78% average from the Automotive Service Technician program. He also recently obtained a new job in his field. Pat has also worked hard to complete the Bronze certification for Automotive Technician and the Drive Clean exam. He is now a member of the Ontario College of Trades. On June 14, 2016, he will write his Red Seal exam for his apprenticeship. Pat is now reading at a Level 3 and writing at a Level 2. He is now a licensed mechanic.

Pat's dedication to his learning has had a huge, lasting impact on his life and the lives of his wife and young children. Pat has proven that with dedication, discipline, hard work and support, he can achieve his goals with great success. Pat has improved his reading and writing skills, along with his employment situation. He can now emphatically say that he is a "College Graduate!" Pat has been a true inspiration to the Instructors in the LBS program at OLL, along with the rest of the OLL staff. It has been a pleasure to observe Pat's growth, in terms of his reading and writing skills. OLL honestly couldn't be happier for him, or his success! As Pat recently graduated from Fanshawe College, we have only just begun to share his journey and/or the exciting news. OLL has no doubt, but that his story will be an inspiration to the other learners in the LBS program, LBS colleagues and members of the community at-large.

Windsor-Essex Recipient:

Recipient of the Literacy Promotion Award 2016 for Windsor-Essex

This year, in Windsor-Essex, we would like to recognize the contributions of **Jeff Tompkins**.

Jeff has participated in the Unemployed Help Centre's Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program where he upgraded his digital skills to assist in his online job search. He also utilized the on-site Employment Services and completed the Pre-Apprenticeship for Cooks program.

Jeff was a model student who worked hard to improve his skills. He did not let any difficulties he came across deter him from continuing his path toward self-improvement. He volunteered his time to help prepare food for the VON Meals on Wheels program, while gaining valuable experience to be marketable to employers.

He saw and appreciated the opportunity to improve himself and give back to the community simultaneously.

Jeff's story was captivating. He first painted the picture of the difficulties he experienced in school and the long-term impact it had created in his life. Jeff's prior education was very negative. Jeff was diagnosed with a learning disability, and as a result, expectations for him were low. As an adult, Jeff continued to feel the negativity from his previous experiences and was hesitant to seek assistance in his job search. When he connected with the Unemployed Help Centre, he found that the staff were very supportive and referred him to LBS to improve his digital skills. When in the LBS program, he was pleased with the individual attention he received, and the positive encouragement helped him change his view on education. From there, he had the confidence he needed to start a new career, and he took on additional training to become a cook.

Jeff conveyed the importance of community agencies who deliver literacy and educational programs, like the Unemployed Help Centre. He explained that the individuals who delivered these programs have a lasting effect on the lives they touch. His speech reminded community members of the importance of these programs and the impact that referrals have on clients.

Jeff continues to promote LBS programs and community agencies in his personal and professional life.