

CLUB AMICK

ANNUAL REPORT 2011/2012

Club Amick is the fourth phase of the Lieutenant Governor's Aboriginal Literacy initiatives which target the needs and interests of First Nations youth in remote northern communities. The goal for Club Amick is for young Native children to create their own home libraries, to receive packages addressed in their names featuring a newsletter together with a special book selected just for them, and to keep the literacy light burning.

Thirty-five Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities with 4,800 children in kindergarten to Grade 6 currently participate in the program. Each child receives a new book and an activities-oriented newsletter four times per year. The books also include name plates so readers can personalize their books. Club Amick is budgeted at approximately \$250,000 per year which averages to about \$50 per child. At about 72% of the cost of the program, books represent the largest expenditure. Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS) and Ontario Library Service – North (OLSN) coordinate all aspects of Club Amick. SOLS and OLSN are transfer payment recipients of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport providing a wide range of support services to public libraries throughout Ontario.

Books

Books are selected by a team of librarians using selection criteria developed for the program and based on a unique theme for each distribution. Books chosen reflect the best literature available to achieve the goals of Club Amick. Priorities include:

- Age and culturally appropriate material
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit authors where possible
- Canadian authors where possible
- Canadian publishers where possible

To ensure the selections are consistent with reading skill levels and interests, the Kwayaciiwin Education Resource Center in Sioux Lookout is available for consultation. Please visit Club Amick's website¹ for a complete list of the books distributed this year.

This year's themes were:

- Voyages
Embarking on a journey is a popular theme in children's stories, perhaps because going from the place we know to the places we don't can be exciting. Traveling by foot, boat, car, train or imaginary space craft, the characters in these books set off on a voyage for a variety of reasons. Augustus, the tiger, sets off to find his smile. Stanley, the family dog, leaps aboard a boat in search of good food. Aboriginal stories include *The Vision Seeker* by James Whetung and *The Birchbark House* by Louise Edrich. We also included Joseph Bruchac's book *March Toward Thunder*, the story of a 15 year old Abenaki soldier in the American Civil War.

¹ www.clubamick.ca

- Rhymes and Poems
This selection of books of rhymes and poetry includes the classics like *One Fish Two Fish* by Dr. Suess and *Lizzy's Lion* by Dennis Lee. Poetry is wonderful when shared with others and so we included *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* which is intended for group reading. The poems by David Bouchard in his books *Long Powwow Nights* and *Drum Calls Softly* are also good choices for groups reading aloud.
- Magazines
The magazine format with its short articles and lots of photographs is very appealing to children. Magazines published in both Canada and the US were selected. Some titles included short stories, activities and information and others focused on specific topics including science, art, geography, animals and history.
- Celebrations
Scaredy Squirrel has a Birthday Party is just one book about birthday celebrations, but there are lots of other celebrations that are the setting for a good story like New Year's Eve, Christmas and weddings. *Great Musicians from Our First Nations* and *A Native American Thought of It* are books that celebrate achievements. *Fatty Legs: A True Story* by Christy Jordan-Fenton, like some of the other books in this selection, is about celebrating when we overcome adversity². *Morning on the Lake* celebrates sharing time with someone who loves us.

Newsletter

The newsletter shares the same theme(s) as the books and supports literacy activities in the home, community and school. First Nation content is included whenever possible along with word puzzles, activities, jokes, science facts, poems, a care-givers' section and submissions from the children in the communities. The children are encouraged to write to Amick (the friendly beaver who corresponds with club readers through the newsletter) and to submit a variety of creative works, such as book reviews, jokes, drawings and poems. Space is made available in the newsletter to display some of the postcards sent in by readers. In this way, they not only benefit from, but contribute to, the development of a community of readers. Please visit the website to see the newsletters.

Contests

Contests continue to be a success among both Club Amick readers and their community supporters. Winners are sent certificates of acknowledgement and prizes. Winning entries are also posted on the Club Amick website and in the newsletter. This year, submissions were sent in by Club Amick readers for the following contests:

- Postcards
Once again this year, readers were challenged to see which school could send in the greatest number of postcards over the school year. Colourful, story-filled postcards came from readers in Club Amick communities all over northern Ontario. The grand prize went to a group of Club Amick readers from St. Andrew's School in Kashechewan.

² *Fatty Legs* was the First Nations Communities Read winning title in 2011/12.

- **Poetry Contest**
Back by popular demand, Club Amick readers participated in our third poetry contest this year. Poetry using the theme of 'voyages' or 'celebrations' was invited and readers from J.R. Nakogee Elementary School in Attawapiskat won.
- **Win-An-Artist**
Club Amick has run a Win-An-Artist contest for several years. Club Amick readers are asked to choose a Club Amick book and produce a written and visual review of the selected book. The winners receive a visit from Anishinaabe graphic novel artist, Chad Solomon. This year, Chad added life-size puppets and integrated them with Club Amick books to engage readers in literacy. We were able to bring Chad's interactive workshop to readers in Fort Severn and Kingfisher Lake in October 2011.

Funding

To date, Club Amick has received a total of \$1.5 million in grants and donations: \$325,000 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, \$328,000 from the Government of Ontario, and \$810,000 in donations from hundreds of individuals and organizations. We also receive the support of several organizations that have made in-kind contributions. The Library Services Center donates space for receiving and sorting the books and newsletters for each distribution. Various transportation companies donate or reduce the cost of shipping. They include Gardewine Group Inc., The Erb Group of Companies, Bamaji Airways, Air Creebec, Nakina Air Service and Wasaya Airways.

Originally conceived as a five-year project, 2011/12 was Club Amick's sixth year due to the generosity of the many funders. At this time, we have sufficient funds for a final partial year of the program in 2012/13 and the Lieutenant Governor's office is seeking a lead donor to sustain the program for another five year mandate.

Thank you

The Club Amick team and the Lieutenant Governor's office would like to extend a *chi-miigwech* to all of those who have been involved in helping to improve reading skills among Club Amick readers! We would especially like to thank members of the Club Amick communities for maintaining the club in the schools. This affirmation of support sends an important message to the children that others care about their well-being.

Number of Children and Books (2011/12)

Communities (35)	Children K to 6	Books Sent
Aroland	65	400
Attawapiskat	345	1440
Bearskin Lake	67	320
Big Trout Lake	180	800
Cat Lake	92	400
Constance Lake	115	560
Deer Lake	247	1120
Eabametoong	180	800
Fort Albany	102	480
Fort Severn	50	240
Ginoogaming & Long Lac 58	94	400
Kasabonika Lake	177	760
Kashechewan	355	1520
Keewaywin	65	320
Kingfisher Lake	99	448
Marten Falls	52	240
Mattagami	31	160
Mishkeegoganmang	170	720
Moose Cree	269	1128
Muskrat Dam	37	240
Neskantaga	35	240
Nibinamik	81	400
North Caribou	106	480
North Spirit Lake	57	240
Pikangikum	560	2240
Poplar Hill	116	480
Red Lake	30	160
Sachigo Lake	74	400
Sandy Lake	401	1680
Slate Falls	34	160
Wabaseemoong	139	640
Wapekeka	80	400
Webequie	132	600
Weenusk	32	160
Wunnumin Lake	102	480
TOTAL	4,771	21,256

Note: The fourth distribution was delayed to September 2012 due to production issues and fires in some communities.

2011 Club Amick Donors

\$5,000 - \$20,000

Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario
Power Workers Union - Local 1000

\$500 - \$5,000

All Saints Ladies Auxiliary
Anonymous
E. I. du Pont Canada Company
Ontario Home Builders' Association
Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation
Parkdale United Church
Peel Elementary Occasional Teachers
Rotary Club of Toronto Eglinton
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Sir Alexander Mackenzie Sr. Public School
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Up to \$500

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