

CLUB AMICK ANNUAL REPORT 2012/2013

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.

Originally conceived as a five-year project, 2012/13 was the project's seventh year due to the generosity of the many funders. The Government of Ontario has been the lead funder through several ministries and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. In addition, hundreds of individuals and organizations have stepped forward with donations over the years. With new one-time grants from the Government of Ontario, we have sufficient funds for two more years of the program though at a slightly reduced level (three distributions annually rather than four).

In 2012/13, thirty-six Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities with just over 5,000 children in kindergarten to Grade 6 participated in the program. Each child received three new books over the course of the school year along with an activities-oriented newsletter¹. The books also included name plates so readers could personalize their books.

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

This year's themes were:

- **School Days**
There are many children's books written about the fun and anxiety of school days. While this selection includes the silly stories of dogs going to school and a gingerbread man on the loose, also included are Nicola I Campbell's books Shi-shi-etko and Shin-chi's Canoe which tell the story of two very young children's experiences at residential schools. The effort of the children of Attawapiskat to have a new school built in their community is described in Janet Wilson's book Shannen and the Dream for School. Children around the world share the experience of reading the stories about the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and so two Harry Potter books are part of this selection.

¹ They also received the "Celebrations" books and newsletter which was originally scheduled for the end of the 2011/12 school year but delayed due to fires in several communities.

- **On the Move**
People and animals are all on the move; walking, flying, boating and in a space ship. And where do they go? Some go to town, the jungle, the beach and even the bottom of the world. These books open the window to other places.
- **Laugh Out Loud**
There isn't an easier path to making reading enjoyable for children, than a funny book. A boy with an alien living in his nose and a dragon-slaying knight who finds himself helping three dragon youngsters go to bed are almost as funny as a book about giving a cat a bath. Of course we also included a joke book as part to the selection for this theme.

Please visit Club Amick's website² for a complete list of the books distributed this year.

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 have been an important part of stimulating engagement for Club Amick readers. While no new contest was mounted this year, the grand prize from last year's Win-An-Artist contest was awarded. The winners were the readers at Mary Jane Naveau Memorial School in Mattagami who submitted an interesting book report on *The Vision Seeker* by James Whetung. They received a visit from Janet Wilson who has more than 50 books to her credit and a list of prestigious national and international awards for both illustration and writing. Janet is the illustrator of *Solomon's Tree*, the 2004 First Nation Communities Read title selection. She is also the author of *Shannen and the Dream of a School*, the 2012-2013 First Nation Communities Read selection.

Funding

Club Amick has received over of \$1.55 million in grants and donations since its inception:

- \$325,000 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation
- \$403,000 from the Government of Ontario including a grant of \$75,000 from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs this year
- \$823,000 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.

² www.clubamick.ca

Club Amick is budgeted at approximately \$60,000 per distribution. Books represent the largest expenditure at over 70% of the cost of the program. At this time, we have sufficient pledges and funds for two more years at three distributions per year. With the support of the Lieutenant Governor's office, we are still seeking a lead donor to sustain the program in future.

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.

2012 Club Amick Donors

\$5,000 - \$20,000³

Hydro One Networks Inc.
Power Workers Union - Local 1000

\$500 - \$5,000

All Saints Ladies Auxiliary
Anonymous
Books With Wings
Institute of Public Administration (Toronto Regional Group)
Parimala Joseph
Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation
Peel Elementary Occasional Teachers
Pat Sims-Eastwood
Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators
St. Paul's United Church

Up to \$500

Anonymous
Jonathan Awerbuck
Hon. James Bartleman
H. Blakey
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
Jeremy Garrett
Lock Johnston
John and Carol Kittredge
Miss Elizabeth Mason
Susan McTavish
Brenda Skerratt
Francie Wyland

³ Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario's 2012/13 donation arrived in January 2013.

Number of Children and Books (2012/13)

Communities	Children K to 6	Books Sent
Aroland	63	226
Attawapiskat	345	1074
Bearskin Lake	73	253
Big Trout Lake	180	597
Cat Lake	99	328
Constance Lake	116	433
Deer Lake	198	656
Eabametoong	180	597
Fort Albany	134	418
Fort Severn	50	179
Ginoogaming & Long Lac 58	86	298
Kasabonika Lake	141	471
Kashechewan	372	1162
Keewaywin	67	253
Kingfisher Lake	95	343
Marten Falls	49	191
Mattagami	32	134
Mishkeegoganmang	170	536
Moose Cree	349	1072
Muskrat Dam	44	149
Neskantaga	35	149
Nibinamik	82	293
North Caribou	140	418
North Spirit Lake	69	224
Pikangikum	560	1670
Poplar Hill	123	417
Red Lake	63	224
Sachigo Lake	92	298
Sandy Lake	450	1370
Slate Falls	34	119
Wabaseemoong	235	714
Wapekeka	80	298
Webequie	133	448
Weenusk	32	119
Wunnumin Lake	105	358
TOTAL	5,076	16,489

Note: The program was reduced to three distributions this year due to funding constraints.