

CLUB AMICK ANNUAL REPORT 2013/2014 SCHOOL YEAR

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, 2013/2014 was the project's eighth year, thanks 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 through the ministries of Aboriginal Affairs and Education, and through the Rotary Club of Toronto, we were able to continue the program this year, and will be able to next year, though both years a slightly reduced level (three distributions annually rather than four).

In 2013/2014, thirty-six Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities with just over 5,200 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 newsletter. The books also included name plates so readers could personalize their books. Blank Club Amick postcards are also distributed with the books. Teachers are encouraged to have students send postcards back to Club Amick. Hundreds of postcards are returned with colourful artwork and written acknowledgment that the children enjoy the books they receive. This year we have received almost 200 replies from children all over the NAN Territory.

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:

- 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.

- Water
Water is one of our sacred gifts from Creator. It is up to each and every one of us to respect this gift. Each of the books selected for this distribution were water themed. From a lost beaver to Scaredy Squirrel at the Beach, to Nancy Drew and the Cape Mermaid Mystery, readers were invited to jump in and get wet reading their new Club Amick books.
- Seven Grandfathers
Honesty, Truth, Love, Courage, Bravery, Wisdom, and Humility are the Seven Grandfather Teachings. These teachings make up many of the life lessons that are found in many books for children. We can all learn from books that teach us about Native M of Courage or what happens on the day crayons decide to quit doing their jobs.

Please visit Club Amick's website at <http://clubamick.ca/themes1.htm> for a complete list of the books distributed this year.

Staff Activities

A part-time staff person was hired in the fall of 2013 to assist with outreach to communities, additional complementary programming, and evaluation. Nancy Cooper, who brings with her over two decades working in the Aboriginal education field, started work at the end of September. She maintains close contact with member schools via a Club Amick listserve and phone. She was an invited speaker at an Education Conference hosted by the Nishnawbe Aski Nation and is currently making plans for community visits and events. She will also be implementing a comprehensive program evaluation in 2014.

Kobo/Frontier College/Free the Children

Through a generous donation from Kobo, Free the Children, and Frontier College, the Club Amick Program was gifted with one Kobo Touch e-reader per participating school. Thanks to a generous donation from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, Club Amick will be able to load each e-reader with plenty of engaging and interesting resources for students from K-6.

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, plans are underway for a bookmark artwork contest with the winning child in each school receiving a school wide comic/graphic book design workshop facilitated by a well known Aboriginal artist who specializes in the graphic novel format.

Funding

Club Amick has received over of \$1.763 million in grants and donations since its inception:

- \$325,000 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation
- \$553,000 from the Government of Ontario including a grant of \$150,000 from the Ministry of Education this year
- \$885,000 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.

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 one more year with three distributions. In early 2015, barring any new funding opportunities that may arise, we will begin to explore ways to successfully transition Club Amick to another host agency, one that can actively fundraise and facilitate the book deliveries on an ongoing basis.

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.

2013/2014 Club Amick Donors

\$20,000-\$50,000

Rotary Club of Toronto

\$5,000 - \$20,000¹

Hydro One Networks Inc.

Power Workers Union - Local 1000

Elementary Teacher's Federation of Ontario

\$500 - \$5,000

All Saints Ladies Auxiliary

¹ Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario's 2012/13 donation arrived in January 2013.

Institute of Public Administration (Toronto Regional Group)
Peel Elementary Occasional Teachers
Pat Sims-Eastwood

Up to \$500

Anonymous
Jan Bivall
H. Blakey
Carol Kittredge
Miss Elizabeth Mason
John Mark Robertson
RWTO-OERO
Ann Sager
Walter Wells

Number of Children and Books (2013-2014)

Communities	Children K to 6	Books Sent
Aroland	72	216
Attawapiskat	336	1008
Bearskin Lake	79	237
Big Trout Lake	206	618
Cat Lake	98	294
Constance Lake	118	354
Deer Lake	208	624
Eabametoong	220	660
Fort Albany	139	417
Fort Severn	66	198
Ginoogaming & Long Lac 58	84	252
Kasabonika Lake	183	549
Kashechewan	364	1092
Keewaywin	75	225
Kingfisher Lake	110	330
Marten Falls	63	189
Mattagami	33	99
Mishkeegoganmang	145	435
Moose Cree	349	1047
Muskrat Dam	48	144
Neskantaga	40	120
Nibinamik	70	210
North Caribou	110	330
North Spirit Lake	60	180
Pikangikum	600	1800
Poplar Hill	122	366
Red Lake	40	120
Sachigo Lake	93	279
Sandy Lake	406	1218
Slate Falls	40	120
Wabaseemoong	235	705
Wapekeka	80	240
Webequie	135	405
Weenusk	50	150
Wunnumin Lake	125	375
TOTAL	5207	15621

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