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THE SAINT JOHN LEARNING EXCHANGE

# Our Year at a Glance



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Volume 1, Issue 2  
September 21, 2010

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## Outgoing President, Kate Murray

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Farewell, but not goodbye! The Saint John Learning Exchange has had yet another banner year; wonderful stories, great achievements and, of course, continued success.

It has been my pleasure to sit on the Board for the past 7 years, and although I am stepping down as Board President for 2010, I will not be going far. I plan on staying on the Board, as I can't part with such a wonderful organization just yet. For the 2010 year, we are welcoming a new face, Linda Boyle. I welcome Linda and I know she will bring a whole new perspective to the Board as well as whole host of knowledge. On a parting note, THANK YOU for all your hard work, facilitators, learners and support staff alike.

Kate Murray (Barnett)

*A special thanks to our outgoing President, Kate Murray and outgoing Treasurer Deanna Brown for all of their hard work and dedication to the Learning Exchange. We'll miss you!*

## Board of Directors

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(Outgoing President)	Kate Murray - Xerox	David Brown - King Mazda
(Incoming President)	Linda Boyle - NBCC	Julie Assaff - St. Malachy's High
(Vice President)	Belinda Allen - PETL	Jeff Burgess - Lawson & Creamer
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(Outgoing Treasurer)	Deanna Brown - Moosehead	
(Treasurer)	Joan MacRae - Grant Thornton	

## Executive Director, Christina Fowler

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The Learning Exchange has had another exceptional year filled with expansion and partnerships. I continue to be amazed with all the accomplishments of our learners, staff and board as we all strive to do our best each and every day. Our organization is committed to championing the cause of literacy and poverty reduction within our community. Our last few years have been built on “outside the box” thinking, implementing programs that will truly make a difference in the lives of our learners and their families. Whether it is assisting learners in going to work full time, obtaining the GED, or building foundational literacy skills we will work and go the extra mile to see success. I am proud to say that we were chosen along with 4 other organizations across Canada to participate in WESCan – Workplace Essential Skills Across Canada project. This partnership has enabled our organization to expand and tailor essential skills assessments and programming for foundational level learners in need of skills training, to move toward a next step in employment or education.



This past year we had the privilege of being the recipient of the Tracy Friars “Lets Celebrate” fundraiser. This fundraiser provided over \$28,000 for our “Fuel the Brain” Healthy Snack program, and the Tracy Friars “Lets Celebrate” scholarship for learners who are entering post secondary institutions. Our organization was truly honored to be chosen to be a part of a wonderful event whose sole purpose is to make our community a better and stronger place.

As the Learning Exchange continues to grow we stay true to our learner-centered approach that directs all of us to a new, exciting and ever changing vision.

## Student Liaison Coordinator, Stacey Doyle

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In February 2010, the Learning Exchange introduced an innovative new tool for the assessment of individuals interested in participating in our workplace essential skills training programs. It had become clear that the traditional method of assessing people who came through our doors was no longer relevant for all indi-

viduals at all times. The CAMERA (Communication and Math Employment Readiness Assessment) looks at an individual's skills in reading, writing, document use and numeracy as they relate to the workplace. The tasks presented in the assessment are modeled on real workplace tasks and use documents that look like ones used in the workplace. As well, CAMERA's diagnostic tool provides a means of tracking an individual's pro-

gress on an ongoing basis. The placement assessment helps the assessor place the individual in the appropriate program, and the diagnostic tool helps the facilitator with program planning based on the participants' needs. With the introduction of CAMERA, we are now able to more clearly identify the needs of individuals, and thus ensure we are providing relevant programming into the future.

## WESCan Brings New Models for Workforce Literacy to Saint John



This year, the SJLE was selected to participate in a workforce literacy project, WES-Can (Workforce Essential Skills

across Canada, funded by the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills.) This project partnered Toronto's PTP, "Pathway to Possibilities", one of the largest non-profit, community based literacy programs in Canada, with five adult education sites from across the country; British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Nova Scotia, and us here in New Brunswick.

Through our participation in WESCan we have gained new assessment and instructional tools, and invaluable training and support from PTP staff, other participants, and the developers of the tools, Karen Geraci and Marisa Mazzulla.

PTP's interest in working

with us was sparked by the Ties 2 Work program; a program similar to their own in its emphasis on employable essential skills, but unique in its direct link for learners to employment.

I travelled to Toronto in December to meet with PTP and our network of new partners and began planning our strategy for implementing these resources into our existing programming as well as thinking about what new workforce literacy programming we could offer. Karen and Marisa came to Saint John in March to provide training in the standardized assessment system, CAMERA (Communications and Math Employment Readiness Assessment) and their Workwrite instructional series.

The addition of CAMERA and Workwrite to the SJLE has been successful. This month we will introduce a new program, The Workforce Preparation Program (WPP). WPP

will accommodate employment-bound adults who need literacy and skills development before they can achieve and retain entry level employment, and who are not candidates for Ties 2 Work because they require more than 8 weeks of training and may not have their employment goals determined. This program as a key step towards increasing the workforce in Saint John and accommodating a group of learners for whom there hasn't been a viable program option available. With the addition of Ties 2 Work and WPP, the SJLE is branching out from traditional academic models of adult education to better serve our community's needs.

Check out [ptp.ca/wescan](http://ptp.ca/wescan) for more details.

Claire Ashton

Program Coordinator



*The Saint John Learning Exchange thanks Computers For Schools for their on-going, generous support. The WPP class looks forward to their laptops!*

## Honored as the 2009 “Let’s Celebrate” Fundraiser Recipient

The Friars Family “Let’s Celebrate” Concert is an annual event in support of making our community a stronger and healthier place to live. The Saint John Learning Exchange was honoured to be the 2009 recipient of the “Let’s Celebrate” fundraiser. This fundraising event raised over \$28,000 in support of literacy. A portion of the money raised will support our “Fuel the Brain” healthy snack program and The Tracy Friars “Let’s Celebrate” Scholarship.



*Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.*

*Albert Einstein*



## Vickie’s Opinion

Life is one of those funny things, like human rights, and like love, and like the color of our skin, and the choice to vote, and what sexuality you are. We all fight for the same things that we believe in, and love, and people wonder why there is so much pain and hate. I know I am not a hippie and I am not a hero in any way, but I have been in this world for 21 years and I have seen some things in places that no one would expect or believe. Why I feel so much for people is because I have gone through things that some people would say, *be happy that I am here and able to have learned from it.* And if I can get it by the age of 21, why is it so hard for our generation of humanity of

100,000 years ago? I know everyone has different points-of-view, but everyone has the ability to hate, love, and be intelligent, outspoken, intuitive, strong, carefree, mellow, kind, soulful, interesting, wise, worldly, witty, responsible, romantic, imaginative, content, cheerful, and many more. Do any of these words mean anything? But there was a day when hate would not be in a statement of a 21 year old woman. There was that one time for every woman. But then you wonder why, no one stops and looks around?

Vicki Hunt, Learner  
BEST Program





**Congratulations to Brittany Legacy for winning the 2010 Tracy Friars “Let’s Celebrate” Scholarship. Brittany will be receiving \$500 towards her educational pursuits in the Legal Administrative Specialist program at Eastern Trades College.**



## Brittany’s Story

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On April 21, 2009, I walked into the Saint John Learning Exchange with a grade 8 education, with no hope of reaching my goals or attending university. I had very low self-esteem when it came to not having my education. I had decided to attend the Learning Exchange because I felt that it was time to do something for myself and my children. I was tired of working dead end jobs for little or no money. I wanted to be able to provide a life for my family.

I never made it through high school because when I was 13, my dad passed away and with not knowing how to deal with him being gone, I turned to drugs and alcohol to ease the pain. So, ultimately, I went down the wrong path and got in with the wrong crowd and school was put second. After about 3 years of leading this life, I decided to go back to high school. After about 3 months of being back, I found out I was pregnant with my son, so again I

dropped out, but this time to raise my baby. When my son was about a year and a half old, I attempted to give school another shot. I went to Youth Choices to work towards getting my GED but about 2 days after my initial meeting with them, I found out I was pregnant with my daughter, so yet again, I dropped out to raise my children. Finally, 2 years after my daughter was born, I made it here. I was very nervous and feeling down on myself. Although raising my children is very fulfilling, I knew I wanted more, that my children deserved more than I was able to give them with no education.

The staff at the Learning Exchange has been amazing! I have received so much good news while I have been here and every time I shared my good news, all of the staff got very excited and happy for me. My instructor has been very supportive, even when I just needed someone to talk to. While attending the

Learning Exchange, I've found that my self-esteem has improved and I finally believe in myself.

While being here I have applied and been accepted into UNBSJ and will start in September. I will be entering into the Certificate of General Studies for my first year and after that, I will be in the Bachelor of Arts program. I am thinking about majoring in Psychology and possibly aim at getting a doctoral degree.

I will never forget the experience I've had here or the people that have given me so much motivation to aim for my dreams and achieve my goals. I will never be able to thank the staff or friends I have made enough for their continuous support and positivity. They will be greatly missed.

## Community Adult Learning Programs

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The Community Adult Learning Classrooms provide a learning environment where flexibility of scheduling and self-directed

learning plans facilitates the achievement of individual academic goals. Throughout the past year, while there were some learners whose focus was to increase reading comprehension and numeracy skills, as the year progressed and a summer

program was implemented, most of the learners were full time ones whose goal was to prepare for and to write the GED exams. Some wrote at the end of June during an extra exam session requested by the Learning Exchange and came back for a visit to celebrate their successes and to encourage those still studying. It is always an energizing and gratifying experience, on so many levels, for everybody at the Learning Exchange to see the smile of a new GED recipient.

Other learners continued in the summer program. This group of focused individuals maintained an exemplary attendance rate, despite the remarkable weather this summer! Some of these learners are writing the GED exams at the end of September. We wish them all the very best and hope to see them all come back for a visit sporting that tell-tale grin.

Maureen Creamer, facilitator

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The Learning Exchange is the best thing for anyone who has given up hope, who thought there wasn't a light at the end of the tunnel. I had given up hope then I found a light at The Saint John Learning Exchange.

I have been going through some really tough times lately but nobody has given up on me. My teacher is the one who pushes me on when I feel like giving up on my dreams. I want to get my GED but there is always something stopping me. Here people support you. They want for you to get your dream.

Amanda, Student



This year, our learners made progress in reading and writing, through personal development and the

gaining of new skills, the successful challenge of one or more GED tests, and obtaining an NB Driver's Permit.

Among learners who struggle with reading, several moved from reading 20-page booklets to reading chapter books. One said, "This is the first time... I mean, I never read one of these before in my life."

These same learners

made gains in their writing ability. One learner accepted new responsibilities at work as a result. Another, after asking to learn to write poetry, shared poems she wrote at a women's self-esteem course. She said, "I took my poems to that group, and they read them, and it made them cry."

Science and Social Studies remain areas where many of my learners lack information about key concepts. In science, we made use of books from the public library. We also used the internet as a source of information, searching webpages and streaming video from the

international space station.

This year, for social studies, we created our own timeline of Canadian and world history. We talked about the word "cenotaph" and the First World War. We also used the debate around the proposed sale of NB Power to talk about the history of democracy and how governments work.

The successes of the past year, in many cases, hinged on our ability to access resources beyond the classroom walls. And, of course, on the hard work of the learners themselves.

Wendell Dryden, facilitator

## Community Adult Learning Programs Continued

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Over the last ten years I have been privileged to work in the evening Community Adult Learning Program. This

past year has been extremely rewarding and fun!

Learners have improved their literacy skills, found better employment, successfully passed their GED, been able to help their child with homework, written phone messages, notes to school, written and shared personal stories and gone on web searches.

The addition of a Wednesday night class allowed learners the time (and computers!) to either improve upon their

computer skills or to just try figuring out what the world-wide web was all about. Some learners were able to access the internet for the first time, going on web scavenger hunts as well as finding great stories that they were able to read. This afforded learners the independence to be able to look up for themselves answers to questions they had, such as holidays; why they are celebrated and where? The advantage of having computer software that allows stories to be read to learners or have their own stories read to them, is tremendous. Learners are improving their reading comprehension and are now better able to self-edit as they can hear what they have written and decide for themselves if that is what they

meant or if it 'sounds' right.

The summer program proved just as fun and successful – and the learners' dedication was put to the test with all those beautiful hot summer evenings!

The achievements of the many learners who, after having worked all day, whether it be at home or outside the home, come to class three nights a week, is remarkable. To them I say, "Thank you for all your hard work and dedication; you are what makes it so rewarding to be here!"

Ginny Hooper , facilitator

One of the goals of many of the learners here at The Saint John Learning Exchange is to pass the GED (General Education Development) test. What drives a person to work towards this goal is as unique as each person that passes through our doors, and how they work towards this goal must be specially tailored for each individual. The one aspect of the GED quest that is not unique though is the test itself. The GED test is standardized to measure an individual's ability to read and process information, solve problems and communicate effectively in five subject areas: Writing, Reading, Social Studies, Science, and Math. To ensure fairness, all GED tests must adhere to uniform testing standards, with a set amount of questions for each content area within a subject. To help you truly appreciate just how difficult this test can be I challenge you to look over the examples of the GED practice questions on page 10 and attempt to answer them.



Despite the challenging nature of the GED test, many of the learners here at the Saint John Learning Exchange rise to the challenge. The hard work and perseverance involved in pursuing the GED has provided our learners with increased self-confidence. In the end what I hope our learners can take away from the experience is that they are not "just getting a GED," they are gaining a future.

Heather Doyle, facilitator

## TIES 2 Work with Chris Squire



TIES 2 Work is an exciting program which partners with employers who are willing to take a chance on someone

they would not normally employ. We ask the employer to waive their GED or Grade 12 requirement, but we only partner with employers who offer \$10.00 or more as a starting wage. In return they will receive an employee trained in the 9 essential skills needed to perform all jobs. These are: Reading Text, Writing, Numeracy, Document Use, Continuous Learning, Problem Solving,

Computer Use, Oral Communication and Teamwork. These have significant bearing on whether someone is successful in the workplace, regardless of academic ability.

We work with all the documents an employee would be exposed to on a daily basis in the workplace. This benefits the employer by reducing training time, and also benefits the employee as they are already familiar with the documents and tasks, and so it reduces feelings of being overwhelmed in their first few weeks on the job.

Currently, we are midway through the 3 year pilot and

the program is constantly evolving. We are piloting new learning material from Pathway to Possibilities (PTP), in Toronto, as part of a national research project called WES-Can: we are one of five participating organisations, nationally.

A new and exciting development is that we have had our first direct referral from an employer. This means that the employer has selected a potential employee themselves, and has recognised the potential in them, but that they need some work on their skills. This could be an option for other employers as well.

## Katherine's Story

Until I began the TIES 2 Work program, I found I was getting into a rut. I had tried jobs at two different call centers, but never got past the training. I have test anxiety syndrome and found it difficult to pass the final tests. Without a passing mark on these tests, you will not be hired. It was not that I did not know the work, just that I was so stressed about passing the tests that I would ultimately fail by making stupid errors.

I was beginning to find it too difficult to go out into the workforce again, only to lose another job. It was much easier to just sit at home and watch TV.

Once I started the TIES 2 Work program, I began to get myself back into the routine of getting up and going out each day. I started getting my self-confidence back and began to look forward to using my mind and having stimulating conversations.

I would gladly recommend this program to anyone who just needs that little push to get them up and out again.

Special thanks to Chris and everyone else in the TIES 2 Work program who helped me to take charge of my life again.

Katherine Hoyt, Student

*"The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you."*

*B.B. King*

# Continuity of Support: The B.E.S.T. Way with Janelle Flanagan



I have had the privilege of facilitating the B.E.S.T. program for over three years and have made several observations about the power of continuing to support our learners

long after they exit from the program. By using a variety of communication methods (e-mail, phone, social media), visiting over a coffee, or valuing an unplanned visit to the Learning Exchange, I have been able to continue to support our learners along a continuum of self-development readiness. Some examples of this impact have included having learners return to complete their initial

program goals, return for workshops targeting employment, money management, self-esteem, and personal growth, and having them join in on post-secondary and job bus tours. I have also mentored them in accessing career counselors and assisted with referrals to other community resources. This continuity of support has also allowed me to monitor future achievements (passing their GED, acceptance into a post-secondary institution, and work acquisition, to name just a few). Giving positive feedback and encouragement around these and other milestones has an amazing impact on the self-esteem of the learner and encourages them to set further goals. This unique support has led to many new referrals for the Learning Exchange and an opportunity to har-

ness the power of peer-mentoring.

Thus far in 2010, we have had nine learners pass their GED, six learners attend college/university, and two confirmed cases of clients no longer needing the assistance of Social Development due to secured work situations. Several of our learners have been featured in *Around the Block*, one learner won the *Saint John Canterbury Tales Literary Festival Creative Writing Contest*, six completed *Money Matter\$*, and two finished the *Voice Power* program with Tanya Chapman from Irving Oil. 2010 has been a milestone year! I look forward to mentoring our learners for many more years, both within and outside our learning facility.

The mind is everything.  
What you think you become.  
~Buddha~



## GED Questions (from page 8)

(a) *I will continue to recommend your Airline.*

Which correction should be made to this sentence?

- (1) change will continue to will be continuing
- (2) insert a comma after continue
- (3) replace will with might
- (4) change Airline to airline

(b) Quebec was the last province to allow women the right to vote. After lobbying for many years, Quebec women were granted the vote by 1940. Which of the following was the most likely reason that Quebec trailed other provinces in women's suffrage?

- (1) The female population was lower in Quebec than in other provinces.
- (2) Quebec women had a variety of social interests.
- (3) Cultural values in Quebec society discouraged women from voting.
- (4) English Canada discriminated against Canada

(c) The expression  $-5(x-6) - 2(x+8)$  is equal to which of the following expressions?

- (1)  $7x+14$  (2)  $7x+2$  (3)  $-7x-5$
- (4)  $-7x+14$  (5)  $-7x+46$

The Answers Are:

- (a) 4 (b) 3 (c) 4



# Janelle's Class Project!!!

The learners were asked to brainstorm words that describe their experience at the Saint John Learning Exchange. Search the puzzle to find the words they used to express their venture.

G	G	Y	J	V	P	X	T	L	I	C	B	E	Q	P	B	E	U	T
J	O	S	E	D	U	T	I	T	T	A	L	F	B	N	B	P	X	X
N	A	C	P	L	X	U	A	F	E	B	O	T	M	A	H	O	G	J
T	L	K	R	C	R	F	V	N	A	F	P	U	C	Y	T	H	V	O
N	S	I	I	I	O	T	W	T	O	Z	G	H	M	K	V	K	A	V
E	N	Q	D	G	R	M	N	R	P	Y	O	G	L	Z	E	S	X	W
M	E	W	E	S	P	U	M	K	Z	I	B	T	X	C	Y	K	C	N
E	R	R	Q	I	O	L	A	U	C	H	I	N	N	D	L	I	W	R
G	J	A	U	C	H	C	O	E	N	V	Q	E	V	R	X	L	N	E
A	C	P	C	T	F	G	S	F	Z	I	I	N	O	H	K	L	Q	S
R	H	A	S	S	U	P	P	O	R	T	C	P	B	W	Z	S	O	O
U	A	P	U	I	F	F	L	N	A	W	J	A	L	N	K	I	C	U
O	L	E	X	C	S	T	S	P	R	J	X	S	T	N	J	E	O	R
C	L	Z	A	C	H	I	E	V	E	L	Z	S	F	I	W	U	U	C
N	E	A	Y	S	C	O	M	M	I	T	M	E	N	T	O	X	R	E
E	N	P	G	A	W	L	O	H	H	J	D	P	H	R	Y	N	A	S
Y	G	Q	M	A	X	Y	E	C	N	E	D	I	F	N	O	C	G	H
I	E	M	W	T	M	D	E	U	U	D	F	T	C	E	P	S	E	R
J	F	Q	Q	P	T	F	R	I	E	N	D	S	H	I	P	T	O	V

accountable  
 achieve  
 attitudes  
 challenge  
 choices  
 commitment  
 communication

confidence  
 courage  
 encouragement  
 friendship  
 future  
 goals  
 hope

patience  
 pride  
 resources  
 respect  
 skills  
 support

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**Check out our website!**

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### Special Thanks to

#### Our Funders:

- ◇ Post-secondary Education Training & Labour—Employment Division
- ◇ Post-secondary Education Training & Labour—Community Adult Learning Services Branch
  - ◇ Department of Social Development

#### Our Financial Supporters:

- ◇ Innovatia
- ◇ United Way of Greater Saint John
  - ◇ Bell Aliant
- ◇ Greater Saint John Community Foundation

**A Big Thanks to all of our Community Partners.**

## Programs & Services

**Basic Education Skills Training (BEST)** – An employment preparation program that assists youth and adults with self-development skills, pre-employment skills, GED preparation and general upgrading.

**Community Adult Learning Program (CALP)** – This program provides basic literacy and numeracy skills to learners of various levels. For many it involves upgrading preparation for writing the General Education Diploma (GED) tests and entering Community College and other post-secondary programs.



**Learnex** – Individualized educational and training opportunities for adults in the workplace, offered on a fee-for-service basis.

**TIES 2 Work** – An innovative community partnership assisting individuals in short term essential skills training leading to permanent living wage employment. This unique program matches the needs of local employers with individuals in our community seeking employment.

**Fuel the Brain** – A healthy snack program, emphasizing the importance of proper nutrition and the link between learning and healthy choices. This program assists our learners by providing nourishing snacks through the

generous support of Innovatia, the United Way and the Friars Family “Lets Celebrate Concert”.

**Workforce Preparation Program (WPP)** - Literacy and essential skills upgrading for foundational learners who have little or no attachment to the workforce. Through project-based learning and the use of authentic workplace documents, learners will prepare for cross-sector entry-level employment or training, while enhancing their personal health, life skills and community involvement.