

## ANNUAL REPORT 2001-2002

### PURPOSE

The purpose of **le goût de lire / born to read** is to promote family literacy by encouraging parents to read to their young children on a daily basis. Parents of newborn babies are presented with a canvas bag containing four or five brand new books suitable to read to babies and toddlers. In addition, information about the importance of reading to their children right from the beginning, as well as information about adult literacy programs available, is included. There are variations of Born to Read programs throughout Canada and the United States. **le goût de lire / born to read** is modelled on existing programs in the Gaspé region and in New Brunswick.

### ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

This particular **le goût de lire / born to read** project came into existence through the efforts of retired educator Georgie Crawford, who, with the support of the Montreal Council of Women, began recruiting interested volunteers to serve on a steering committee. The first meeting of the committee took place in March 2001. The following months were spent in researching other similar projects, in approaching individuals and organizations for funding, in recruiting additional volunteers, and in finding an appropriate venue to distribute book bags to families of newborns.

The target area for distribution was deemed to be families in communities served by CLSC Pierrefonds, which has the highest birth rate in the province and a high proportion of at-risk families.

Through sponsorship by the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, (QFHSA) a grant for this project was received from ABC Literacy Canada through Literacy Partners of Quebec (LPQ). QFHSA also donated books, through a gift from the Center for Literacy.

This along with donations from private individuals was our mainstay during this first year of operation. Further funding was provided by MNA Geoff Kelley. Marion Daigle's expertise in the literacy field and her advice in grant writing have been invaluable. Charitable status was established through the Pearson Educational Foundation; this has greatly enhanced our funding possibilities. A financial year July 1 - June 30 was established. In-kind support, such as meeting space, printing and mailing, has been generously donated by the Lester B. Pearson School Board. Literacy Unlimited provided space to house books and materials. With all this support we just barely managed to provide bags for all our babies. Since this was our first year of operation, we are pleased, but will have to redouble our fundraising activities next year in order to get this project on a firm footing.

### THE LAUNCH

The official launch of **le goût de lire / born to read** took place on Family

Literacy Day, January 27, 2002, sponsored by the Dollard-des-Ormeaux branch of the Pierrefonds/Dollard-des-Ormeaux Library. Two days before the launch, Georgie Crawford was interviewed about the project on CBC Radio. The launch itself was a resounding success. Through the assistance of a CLSC Pierrefonds nurse, families in the area were invited to this festive event and bags of new books were presented to 16 babies and their families. Many supporters, including some local politicians, were in attendance. Media personalities, Nancy Woods (CBC) and Mark Abley (The Gazette) read stories.

### **MONTHLY WELL-BABY CLINICS**

Regular distribution of bags of books commenced at the monthly well-baby clinic of CLSC Pierrefonds in March of 2002. The CLSC clinic staff has been most welcoming: they have regularly provided us with ample space in their clinic and encourage their clients to stop by our corner. Judging by their actions, they appear to appreciate the value of the project and the commitment of the project volunteers.

Donations of used children's books from supporters of the project have enabled the volunteers to also provide books for the older children coming to the clinic.

By the end of June 2002, 42 bags of books (29 French and 13 English) had been presented at the clinic, the steering committee had coalesced into a solid team, an organizational structure was evolving, and plans for 2002-2003, the first full year of the project, were in the works.

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Georgie Crawford, Chair

June 30, 2002