

Let's get  
together



Photo credits: (page 16, top) courtesy of The Toronto Star;  
(page 19) courtesy of The Globe and Mail.

**Copyright © 1987 East End Literacy Press.  
All rights reserved.**

## **Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Main entry under title:

Let's get together

"This handbook is part of the Language for Change Project."  
ISBN 0-920013-06-6

1. East End Literacy (Association) – Handbooks, manuals, etc. 2. Volunteers – Handbooks, manuals, etc. 3. Literacy. I. East End Literacy (Association). II. Language for Change Project.

LC154.3.T67L48 1987 374'.012 C87-094115-1

# Contents

## INTRODUCTION

## HELPING OUT

- The Library**
- The Office**
- Welcoming Visitors**
- The Student Newsletter**
- Tutoring**



## TALKING IT OUT

- How to Run a Meeting**
- Introductions**
- The Agenda**
- The Chair**
- The Buddy System**
- Speaking Plainly**
- The Minutes**

## SPEAKING OUT

## STEPPING OUT

- How to Plan a Special Event**

## AFTERWORD

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



# INTRODUCTION



This book is about being a student volunteer at East End Literacy. East End is a place where people come to get help with reading and writing. We have many volunteer tutors and some paid staff, but the students at East End also help to run our program. This book tells how students get involved.

We hope that this book will encourage more students to help out at East End. We also hope that this book will give people in other groups ideas about how students can get involved.

# HELPING OUT





## HELPING OUT

East End Literacy has a library, meeting rooms and an office. People get together at East End to learn from each other. Volunteers come here to help out in many ways.

This part of the book tells how students help out.



### The Library

East End has a collection of books for students and their tutors. Students help to choose the books for the library.

**"I came in one day and said, 'I think you should buy these books.' Our library really needs to be improved."**

**"I just come in here and do things - straighten up the books, clean up. At first I didn't. Then somebody said, 'You can come in here anytime.' That's why I like it here - it's friendly."**



A lot of students care about making East End a comfortable place to learn. Some make shelves and furniture for our reading room. Students also help to paint the walls and arrange the furniture.





## The Office

Our office is a busy, friendly place. Students help in the office, and they learn as they work. They help with typing, answering the phones, and making photocopies. They also mail letters and parcels.



**"When the staff ask you to do something, you're not told, you're asked. That's what I like about the people at East End. They never tell you what to do."**

## Welcoming Visitors

Students welcome visitors and tell them about East End Literacy. They make new students and tutors feel at home.





## The Student Newsletter

We think that it is important for everyone to know about what is going on in our program. Students write their own newsletter and send it out to other students. It is easy to read and tells everyone about upcoming events.

## Tutoring

Students help to train new tutors by telling them what it is like to be a student at East End and by talking about the problem of illiteracy.

**"The more real, live students you can introduce, the better. It makes the tutors feel better prepared for the kind of people they may meet."**



### Students For Action

July - August 1986

**UP-COMING EVENTS**

**STUDENT EXHIBIT**  
A group of students is going to have an exhibit on Sunday, July 27th, 10:30 am at ELL at 10:30 a.m. and go to "voluntary" work to the Park. Bring lunch and 20.00 for every one who goes to work.

**Summer Picnic**  
We're going to have a picnic in Riverdale Park at noon on Sunday, July 27th. Get the attached form for the details.

**STUDENT TUTORING SESSIONS**  
July 24, 5:30 - 8:30. Breakfast for new students and regular meeting.  
August 11, 4:30 - 8:30. Meeting.

**Staff School**  
The staff group will meet on Monday, July 21st, and Tuesday, August 5th, from 9:30 - 11:30.

**Open-Up**  
The Thursday afternoon Open-Up will, as usual, close for the summer. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, July 31st.

**WORLD LITERATURE DAY EXHIBIT**  
A student exhibit, staff and volunteers from across the area are invited to a book fair and book sale to raise money for World Literature Day events. The party is at St. Catherine's school, 700 Broom St., 8 - 10:30 Sunday, July 28th.

• On the evening of Thursday, September 10th, students are invited to the World Literacy Program to meet authors and discuss the World Literacy Day Project. All welcome!

• World Literacy Day will be celebrated on Saturday, September 13th with a picnic at Elm Hill at 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. to celebrate the World Literacy Day and a book sale.

• All staff and students, staff, and students are invited to meet with the staff on Monday, July 21st, and Tuesday, August 5th, from 9:30 - 11:30.

East End Literacy  
285 Central St. E., Toronto, Ontario, M5A 2G5 • (416) 593-0000





**"I would like to tutor when I'm more comfortable with my reading and writing. I'd like to teach somebody else what I've learned. They're helping me to learn. I'm giving it back. It's a fair exchange."**



Students also help each other with reading and writing. When they have gained the skills and the confidence, some students become tutors.

# TALKING IT OUT





## TALKING IT OUT

Talking at meetings gives people a chance to solve problems together they could not solve alone.



At East End, students hold their own meetings to help each other solve problems with reading and writing, such as phone bills or official letters they do not understand. They ask the staff for help if they need it.

Some students also want practice in running meetings to get the confidence to go to other meetings in their community.

**"I've learned a lot since I've come here. I had an awful bad attitude about people. I don't know if I was blaming myself or others. After a while, I learned just to help each other, not to go against each other."**



## How to Run A Meeting

### Introductions

Start the meeting by getting to know the other members of the group. Everyone should say their names and why they came.

### The Agenda

The agenda is a list of the things people want to talk about. Everyone should have a chance to add to the agenda. One person should be responsible for writing down the agenda and putting it up where everyone can see it. Decide which items on the agenda are the most urgent. Discuss them first.



**"A lot of students are scared to ask any questions because they feel they might be asking the wrong question or they don't know how to explain themselves. So sometimes in meetings I'd say, 'Come on you guys. You're not going to learn nothing if you don't talk.'"**

## The Chair

Choose someone to run the meeting - the chairperson. Here are the chairperson's responsibilities:

- Make sure everyone is introduced.
- Make sure everyone has a chance to speak. Encourage people who are shy. Ask people to speak in turn.
- Encourage people to listen to each other carefully. Encourage them to respect each other's opinions.
- Watch the clock. If the meeting is going slowly and there are still important things to discuss, remind everyone of the time.
- If there is not enough time to discuss everything, put the items which are left over on the agenda for the next meeting.





It takes skill and practice to chair a meeting well. Take turns chairing the meetings so that everyone has a chance to practise. After the meeting, tell the chairperson which parts of the meeting went well.

**"There are lots of students who have the potential to contribute to the board of directors and to the committees - but it will take time and patience."**



### **The Buddy System**

People who have never been to a meeting can find their first one very confusing. When someone new joins the group, that person should be teamed up with a volunteer who has more experience. Before the meeting, they should go over what happened at the last meeting. During the meeting, they should sit beside each other so that the experienced person can explain what is going on.



## Speaking Plainly

**"One of the first meetings I went to, I didn't understand what the hell they were saying. The second one I went to, I spoke to the chairperson. I said, 'Explain more clearly to a student who wants to learn about meetings.' After that, it got a lot easier."**

People who have been going to meetings for a long time often forget that they use words that the newer people don't understand. It is important to remember to speak clearly and simply.

**"I've learned a lot. I've learned by watching, and listening, and doing. That;s how you learn."**

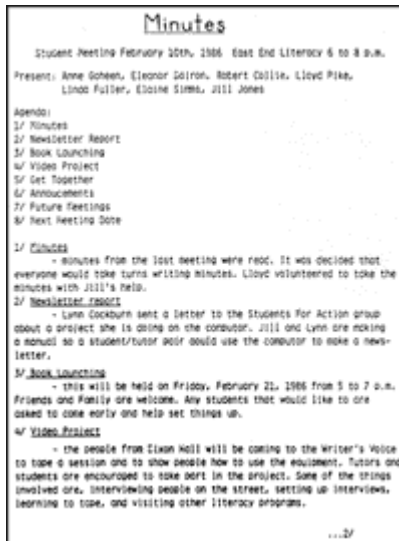




## The Minutes

The minutes are a record of what happened at the meeting. One person - the secretary - should be responsible for taking notes during the meeting. Afterwards, the secretary should summarize these notes. The minutes should include:

- the date the meeting was held
- the names of those who came
- the important things said
- the decisions and plans made
- the work that needs to be done before the next meeting and who will do it
- things that have to be discussed at the next meeting.



At, East End, we put the minutes in a special binder in a place that everyone knows about. If a student needs help reading the minutes, a volunteer or a staff member helps.

# SPEAKING OUT





## SPEAKING OUT

**"I feel that everyone would come forward, there would be a lot of changes in literacy. I feel that government might come across and give people a chance."**

At East End Literacy, we believe that we have to tell the public about illiteracy so that more people will get the chance to learn to read and write.

The people who can explain the problem of illiteracy best are the students. Many East End students help out by talking to community groups, politicians and the media.



**"It's easier to explain the problem of illiteracy if it comes from the horse's mouth. Speaking to groups has given me confidence."**

It takes practice to get the message across well. Here are some important points about how to speak out in public:

- Plan what you want to say. Practise saying it to a friend. Ask your friend to tell you honestly whether you said it clearly. Practise until you are sure that you will get your message across.
- Think about why these people are coming to hear you. What kinds of questions will they ask you? Do you know the answers? Be prepared.





**"We went to a conference. I was speaking to this teacher. He thought I was a tutor because I could keep a conversation up. After, we went to a pub with a few others. I told him I was a student. He couldn't believe that."**

- Learn from your experience. Ask your friends to tell you how well you spoke. If you made some mistakes, don't give up on public speaking. You will do better the next time.

- 



**"When they asked me to speak on the radio, I said 'yes' right away. I had that feeling about myself, that I could do it. Not everybody can do it. If you can, it's good for you."**

# STEPPING OUT





## STEPPING OUT

Special events are a good way for people to get to know each other, have a good time, and learn new things.



**"It's important to get out and socialize. It helps you build confidence in yourself."**



East End students have helped to organize many events, such as apple picking trips, Christmas parties, book launchings, summer picnics, film nights, and visits to other literacy programs.



**"I have organized a lot of events. It seems like they just happen but they don't."**

It takes planning to have a successful event. Here are some of the things that students have learned.





## How to Plan A Special Event

1. Invite everyone who might be interested to come to a planning meeting.
2. Plan the program for your event. This is an example of our program for the 1985 Christmas Party:

### Christmas Party program

6:00 - 6:30p.m.	Greeting guests, socializing
6:30-7:30	Potluck dinner
7:30-8:30	Singing carols, visit from a student dressed up as Santa Claus
8:30-12:00	Dancing, socializing

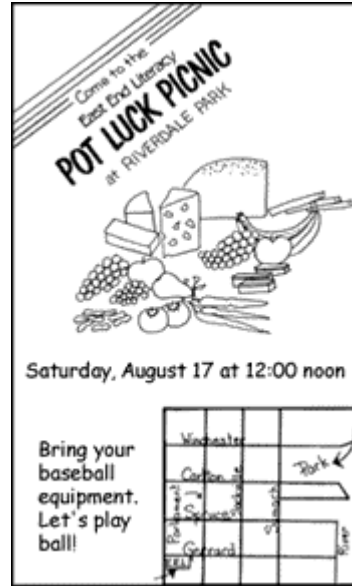


3. Pick a date and a time for the event. Check to make sure that no other events will be going on at the same time. That way, you will get as big a crowd as possible.

4. Decide where you will hold the event. The space should be the right size for the number of people you are expecting. It should be easy for people with physical handicaps to get to. Be sure to book the space well in advance.



5. Make a flyer about your event. It should be easy to read. and it should tell people:
- **WHAT** the event is. Will there be a speaker? Games? A film? Do you want people to bring food and drink?
  - **WHERE** the event will be held. Draw a map showing the address and how to get there.
  - **WHEN** the event will be held. Tell people the day of the week, the date, and the time it starts and finishes.
  - **WHO** is invited. Is the event just for the people in your program, or would you like them to bring their families and friends? What about people from other groups?





6. Make a list of everyone you want to come to the event. Everyone on the list should get a copy of the flyer. Phone people and remind them to come. This is very important for people who might need help reading the flyer. Some people might need help getting to the event. Arrange for them to meet with someone who knows the way.

7. Make a list of the supplies that you will need. This is the list that we made when we planned the Christmas party:

- name tags and pens
- tables and chairs
- coat racks
- decorations
- coffee, tea, cream and sugar
- coffee maker, kettle and tea pot
- knives, forks and spoons
- cups, plates and napkins
- cider
- books and poster for display
- costume for Santa Claus
- sound system and music



Can your group afford all the things you will need? What will they cost? How much money do you have to spend on your event? Make a budget.

It is a good idea to ask local storekeepers to donate some of the supplies.

Put your request in writing. Tell the storekeepers about your group and your event. Deliver the letters at least a week before the event. Visit the storekeepers again a few days later and ask if they are willing to give something.

8. Decide who will come early to set up for the event. Someone should be responsible for getting enough chairs, making the coffee, setting out the food, and so on. A few people should be responsible for greeting guests at the door, helping them with their coats, and giving them name tags.
9. Decide who will stay late to clean up after the event.





10. When the event is over, have a meeting to discuss how it went. Was it a success? Did as many people come as you had hoped? Did anything go wrong? How would you do it better next time? Be sure to write letters thanking the storekeepers who donated supplies.



**"When you have a party, nobody knows the difference between the students and the tutors. We are all people first."**

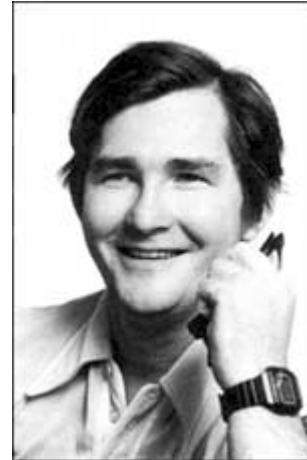
# AFTERWORD

When I read this book, it brought back memories. You don't really think about how much you have accomplished, but I have done a lot of things at East End Literacy. When I read this book, I felt really proud, because this is a part of me.

What this book will tell is that students at East End have learned to have confidence in themselves - to get a group together, to go out and start planning things.

We didn't *have* to do that, but we *wanted* to. We showed that we can do that, and now we can help other groups and other programs to do the same.

- Lloyd Pike,  
East End student and  
member of the board  
of directors  
Toronto, June 1987



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

East End Literacy is a community organization which provides tutoring in basic literacy to adults in the east end of Toronto, Canada. This handbook is part of the Language for Change Project, which was launched in 1985 to encourage student leadership. The handbook is based on the ideas, words, and activities of the learners who are active in our program. It is designed as a tool for people who want to get more involved in their communities - especially those who are learning how to read and write.

Language for Change was made possible through the generous support of The Atkinson Charitable Foundation, The Church of the Holy Trinity, and The B & B Hamilton Foundation.

The production team for Let's Get Together was: Betsy Alkenbrack, Elizabeth Cooke, George Dennison, Rose Doiron, Laura Durham, Elaine Gaber-Katz, Margaret Anne Goheen, Hank Guindon, Jill Jones, Judy Kondrat, Lesley Mackay, Sally McBeth (Co-ordinator), Michael Moore, Mario Pietrantoni, Lloyd Pike, Kathryn Schroeder, Debbie Sims, Vivian Stollmeyer, and Ruth Wehlau.

For a brochure on other materials produced by East End Literacy Press, write:

East End Literacy Press  
265 Gerrard St. East  
Toronto, Ontario M5A 2G3 Canada  
(416)968-6989