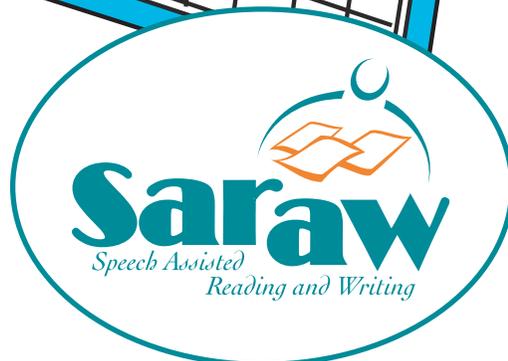


Learner Stories



LADS Literacy and Disabilities Study

LaDS

Literacy and Disabilities Study

Learner Stories

BOW VALLEY
COLLEGE

Neil
SQUIRE
SOCIETY

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- Foundations for Independent Living Department, Capilano College, North Vancouver BC
- Community & Continuing Education, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, Hamilton ON
- Rehabilitation Society of Calgary, Calgary AB

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Thanks to Janet Pringle for guidance on plain language principles.

In addition to this book, (Learner Stories) LaDS has produced two other publications: “**It Gets in Your Brain: Effective Practices in Adult Literacy using SARAW for People with Disabilities**” and the “**SARAW Survey Report**”.

To find any of the three LaDS project publications you can contact the Bow Valley College bookstore or look at them on the NALD website <www.nald.ca>.

- **LaDS Learner Stories** <<http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/study/learner/stories.pdf>>
- **It Gets in Your Brain: Effective Practices in Adult Literacy using SARAW for People with Disabilities** <www.nald.ca/fulltext/study/practice/guide.pdf>
- **SARAW Survey Report** <<http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/study/final/report.pdf>>

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Introduction

I work in an adult literacy program and I always love to read a story written by a learner. To share in the excitement and pride someone feels about a story they have written – whether that story is about themselves, or something that interests them such as their favorite sport, or a dream they’ve had, or something fictional and fantastical. I feel it is an honour to listen as someone reads a piece of their own writing for the first time in their lives.

Adults who attend programs that use the SARAW talking computer program wrote these stories. Some of the programs are adult literacy programs; some programs are at agencies that serve people with disabilities. There are SARAW programs across Canada, and these stories are from people from different locations across Canada. All of the stories in this book, except one, were written by adults with disabilities. One story was written by an English as a Second Language (ESL) learner.

This book is part of the Literacy and Disabilities Study (LaDS) project. LaDS is a national project that researched literacy programming delivered to adults with disabilities, using the SARAW talking computer program.

The intent of this book is to publish authentic writing by learners. Learners wrote the story themselves. Some people typed it themselves onto the SARAW computer; some dictated their story to their teacher or tutor who typed it for them. Some of these stories took one or two classes to write, others more than a year. Once the story was written and the author was happy with the story, no more editing was done. Each story is introduced by the learner’s tutor or teacher or the coordinator of the program. These stories contribute to building and strengthening the diverse voices of adult learners with disabilities.

All of us who were involved in this project are proud of these stories. We hope you enjoy them.

Belle Auld
SARAW Coordinator and
LaDS Project Manager
Bow Valley College
May 2005

This book is part of the Literacy and Disabilities Study (LaDS) project

What is LaDS?

LaDS stands for Literacy and Disabilities Study. It is a national project that researched literacy programming, delivered to adults with disabilities, using the Speech Assisted Reading and Writing (SARAW) computer.

What is SARAW?

SARAW is a talking computer program that teaches basic reading and writing skills to adults with disabilities. SARAW stands for Speech Assisted Reading and Writing.

Learners can choose from a collection of stories written by other adult learners, or they can have the computer read their own writing. There is also an Activities section that has a sounding board to teach phonetics, and word games that help to develop word-recognition skills.



Here are pictures of the SARAW computer, showing the Read portion of the program and the Sounding Board.

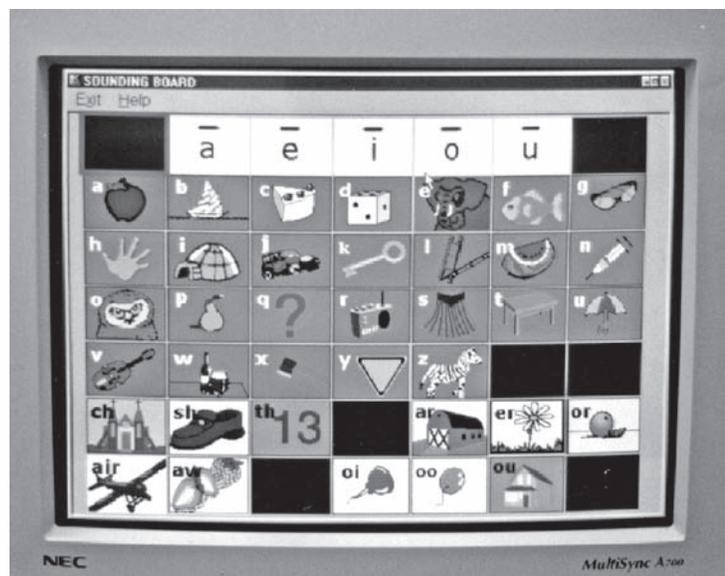
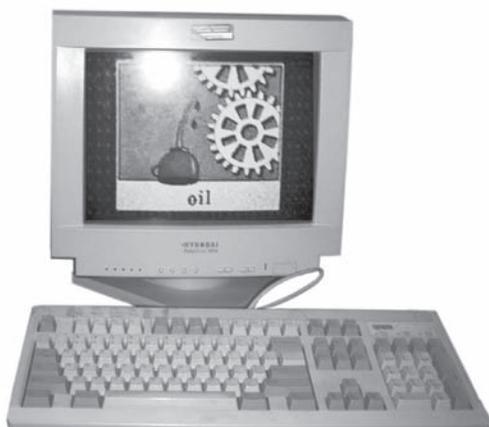
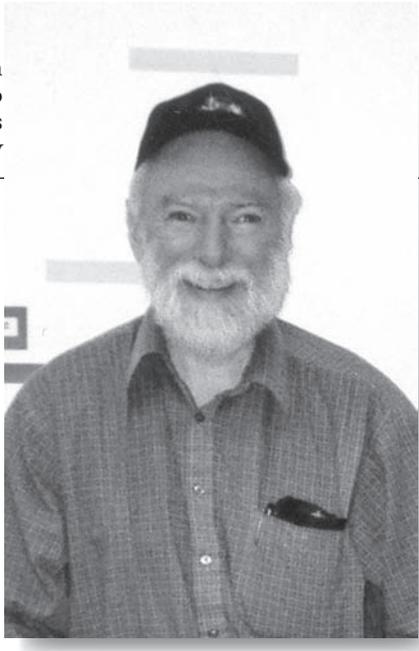


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**Introduction
to
Andy's
story**



Andy is a very talented student. Andy lives in a nursing home and works at W.D.D.S. He comes to literacy class twice a week. Andy competed in the Marion Drysdale Awards last year and was very surprised and honored to be the overall provincial winner. Andy was very proud to meet Gerard Kennedy, the Minister of Education. He won \$300.00, a trophy, medallion and 2 certificates. Andy was also treated to a weekend in Toronto where he was recognized at the TVDSB conference. Andy was thrilled when Focus Productions came to our class and made a video of Andy showing everyone what Andy does in the classroom. Andy's life has changed. He still can't believe all of this happened and continues to make great strides in the literacy room working on a book about himself and his thoughts.

**Dianne Ward
Instructor
Thames Valley District
School Board
Woodstock, Ontario**

**Appreciating
One's
Freedom
by**

Andy Berghuis

I have a medical condition called cerebral palsy. This affects the muscles in my legs. It's been almost four years now that I've had a walker. For a long time I looked at the walker and just thought it was terrible, it was my downfall. The nurses told me I should be proud to be able to use a walker and not to look at it as a handicap but show people that I still get around. Part of my life now is my walker. Everywhere I go the walker goes!!!! My parents and brother helped so much they told me to keep exercising, keep working on the farm. I tried hard to keep the farm but because my legs wouldn't do it and I finally had to give up the farm unwillingly. I felt almost completely lost---I loved the farm----I loved feeding the pigs and collecting the eggs, the little tractor was hard for me to give up. The tractor was my freedom. Now I live in a nursing home called Carresant Care and I feel like I'm under thumb all the time. Where is my FREEDOM???????? back on the farm which is all gone. SOLD the farm is history.

Now I have to realize my freedom is an organ and a computer. I will never be able to walk normal again I have found my new freedom. Thank you Pete I just received my new gift.

FREEDOM IN A BOOK CALLED
MICROSOFT WORD - 1,027 PAGES

I HAVE MY FREEDOM FOR AWHILE

**Introduction
to
Sheila's
story**



Sheila has been taking literacy classes for about 18 months. Soon after joining the Rehabilitation Society of Calgary, Sheila thought that she would like to take part in literacy classes. She enjoys going to classes, as well as working on the SARAW computer. Since she started the literacy program, Sheila's comprehension level has increased significantly. She is able to understand what she is reading a lot better. She treats classes like a fun activity rather than work, and is eager to take work home if she ever has to miss a class.

Sheila enjoys reading the Rehab newsletter, the English Express, and she loves word search. She has even written several stories for the Rehab newsletter.

**Anna Skalka
Program Manager
Rehabilitation Society of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta**

Sheila Bossert

This is a story about my life. When I was a little girl I was very good at times and sometimes a very bad little girl too. I would hide from my sister Lillian and brother Neil. They couldn't find me for a while. Then one day they heard a laugh, ha, ha, ha. They found sister Sheila where she was hiding for about 2 1/2 hours.

I and my sister Lillian and brother Neil were dressed in white clothes, because we were going somewhere. My sister Lillian and brother Neil were to look after me. I fell down the old house toilet. They were in garden eating carrots. They hollar for help, but my brother Neil got sister Sheila. They both got in trouble.

I helped the mice take the labels off soup cans and other cans. Then grandma got very upset with her granddaughter Sheila and took her upstairs. I came back and did it some more. Then grandma got smart and bought cans where the names are on top of the cans, so now she knew what she was opening.

**Introduction
to
Karen's
story**



Karen has been a student with the READ/WRITE Literacy Program in Pincher Creek for six years. She has been with her tutor, Helen Mackenzie, for a long time and they enjoy working with each other.

Karen has written several short stories over the years, but “Dear Diary” is one of her favorites. Although it is not a true story, she enjoyed writing about helping the older woman in her story and hopes everyone else enjoys it too.

**Tracey Preston-Hucik
Coordinator
READ/WRITE Literacy Program
Pincher Creek, Alberta**

Dear Diary
by

Karen Crabb

I am very sorry for not writing to you but yesterday I met a very old woman. I was walking home and she was sitting on a bench. She looked so sad. I went over to her and asked her if she was OK. She looked up at me with her sad eyes and replied "No, please sit with me".

I asked her what was wrong so she told me: "My husband has passed away; my son has grown up and he has a family of his own and we had a quarrel; and I am lonely. So, I come here so I won't be all alone," and a tear rolled down her cheek.

I asked her if she would like to have supper with me. She said she would love to so we went to a restaurant and had a wonderful meal. Later we went for a walk in the park and fed the ducks.

I asked her if she would give her son a call. He might only hang up but you won't know until you try. She agreed and I handed her my cell phone. "Hello Bill, this is your Mom" and tears rolled down her cheeks. I went for a walk and let them talk. When I returned they had just finished.

"Oh, thank you, thank you" said the woman.

I walked her home and we talked. She put her arms around me and thanked me and thanked me. Now, I had tears rolling down my face because I was happy.

The old woman and her son are talking and he has come to visit.

The old woman and I are good friends and see each other often, so Dear Diary, if I don't write in you, it's because I'm not lonesome any more.

**Introduction
to
Rebecca's
story**



Please allow me to introduce myself, my name is Sean Gilpin and I am the educational assistant for a wonderful woman. Rebecca Clark is a student at Humber College in Toronto, Ontario. She is attending the Access for Success program which is a career development, life skills and academic upgrading program for students with disabilities. Rebecca's goal within the program is to determine a suitable career that she can be successful in. She has narrowed her focus to volunteering her time at a retirement community.

Rebecca is an energetic, outgoing woman who strives for perfection in every aspect of her life. She consistently amazes me with her positive attitude and kind heart. Rebecca was born with cerebral palsy. She is non-verbal and uses a power

chair because of her limited motor skills. Rebecca has never let her disability prevent her from being an active and involved individual in both her school and personal life.

Rebecca loves learning and has enjoyed the process of writing her story immensely. She has drawn from her own life experiences to tell her story. She was extremely satisfied with the outcome of the hard work she put into her writing and is proud to share it with you.

Rebecca and I hope that you enjoy her story. It has been a wonderful experience for both she and I!

**Sean Gilpin
Educational Assistant
Humber College
Toronto, Ontario**

**Giraffe And
Bear at School
by**

Rebecca Clark

Each morning Giraffe and Bear travel to school. They both leave for school at 8 o'clock. They both take a bus to school. It takes them 15 minutes to get to school. They are in Mr. Cards' class. Each morning Giraffe says, "Hi! Bear! How are you?" Bear says, "I am good. What's up?" Giraffe says, "Nothing". And then class starts.

Each morning giraffe and bear work on math. They learn about money. It is a little hard for both giraffe and bear but they always try their best. They also use computers to help them learn new words. Giraffe and Bear are excited and happy to learn new words because it helps them make better sentences.

At 1 o'clock giraffe and bear go for lunch. Giraffe brings 2 peanut butter and jam sandwiches for lunch. He has apple juice to drink and 2 oranges for a snack. Bear brings hamburger for lunch and eats apple pie and a cookie for dessert. His favorite drink is chocolate milk.

At lunch giraffe and Bear like to talk about the jobs they want in the future. Giraffe says, "I want to work at an animal farm helping with all kinds of things." Bear is excited for Giraffe. Bear want to work in a library helping to keep it clean and tidy. Giraffe thinks that would be a boring job. He teases Bear and says, "that is a boring job." He throws a little bit of food at bear.

At 2 o'clock Giraffe and bear go back to class. Mr. Cards has Giraffe and Bear type summaries about the stories they have read. Giraffe and Bear get frustrated sometimes because making perfect sentences is hard. But Giraffe and Bear are happy because they are learning new words.

Sometimes in the afternoon Giraffe and Bear go to the gym. They exercise and play basketball. Gym is a lot of fun because they are not in class.

At the end of the day Giraffe and Bear get ready to go home by putting on their coats and signing out for the day. Giraffe says, "Good night Bear," and Bear says "see you tomorrow Giraffe." Sometimes they have to wait for their bus to come and this is boring for them. Each night Giraffe and Bear get a good night sleep and do it all over again the next day. THE END

**Introduction
to
Crystal's
story**

As a tutor for Crystal, I have worked with her for over two years. Crystal is diligent and consistent in learning. Crystal works very hard at learning and reading. Crystal enjoys writing stories and especially enjoys the Speech Assisted Reading and Writing Program.

**Kathryn Henry
Tutor
Bow Valley College
Calgary, Alberta**

Crystal Dundas

It was a bright sunny day when Crystal Dawn Dundas was born. She was the first girl to be born on the ward. Her mother was very proud.

I guess I was like a Curious George growing up. I got into some stuff my mother did not like. I guess it was pretty scary on my first day of school. I tried to make new friends. My favourite subject was gym. I liked badminton with the birdy. My teachers were nice.

In high school I tried to make some new friends. I took Child Care and Horticulture in school. There were many new activities in High School. Summer vacation was my favourite. In 1999 I graduated from High School.

My first job was at the Pawn Shop. This was one of my favorite jobs, because I got to tidy up the change room and organize the clothes. I helped Bev put the clothes in bags and she took care of the money. When I was not busy I would dust the shelves. On my lunch time I got to sit outside. Bev would come and we could chit chat. I tried to help out as much as I could. In the evening I went home.

Now, I'm improving myself so I can get an office job. I'm taking the Speech Assisted Reading and Writing Course (SARAW). As well, I am taking Basic Business Skills on-line. This is a lot of reading, it keeps me busy and makes me feel good. This will help me when I get a job.

People should take this course because it helps them to learn. Then you can get a job you feel proud of.

**Introduction
to
Betty's
story**



Betty Flichel entered the SARAW program in 1990. She was one of the pioneering students in the program. Betty enjoys reading the West Coast Reader and CD Rom Books. Her focus has been on language that has helped her to manage her life. She especially enjoys cooking and reading about new recipes. Betty has taken two breaks from the College, but returns periodically to maintain her skill level and interest in reading and writing. Betty also enjoys using email to communicate with friends and family.

**Don Kirkby
Instructor
Foundations for Independent Living Dept.
Capilano College
North Vancouver, British Columbia**

Betty Flichel

I have cp. my mom said no way could go to school. in 1987, Neil Squire came to my home with the computer. it didn't have a voice. in 1990, Don Bentley, Pat and cathy asked me to come to capilano college. I said, "oh yeah!" I stopped going. in 1998 Geoff asked me if I me wanted to come. christine told me it was in a new room. I came one day a week, friday. I learned math. in 1999, I started English its almost one year. wow!

**Introduction
to
Andrea's
story**



Andrea has been involved with the Rehabilitation Society of Calgary for several years, but it is only about a year ago that she became interested in the Rehab literacy program. Her reading and writing skills have improved significantly since then, and she does not view the classes as work but as a fun activity. She enjoys reading and writing very much. In fact she writes for the Rehab newsletter every month.

**Anna Skalka
Program Manager
Rehabilitation Society of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta**

**The Park and
the Frogs
by**

Andrea Gillespie

My friend and I saw some frogs in the park. Before we saw any frogs we heard them. They make a chirping sound. We had to sit quietly before we could see them. They are happy when it is not cold out.

**Introduction
to
Kylan's
story**



It is my privilege to have known Kylan Hunter for about eight years. I first met him when I was already a volunteer at ARBI (The Association for the Rehabilitation of the Brain Injured) in Calgary. On our first meeting I was told that he had suffered serious injuries in a car crash and at the time I met him he could speak, but with difficulty and physically, although he was in a wheelchair he could do little for himself except keep a determination to work to the best of his ability and restore as much as possible, his former wellbeing. He and I worked together through those years on his physiotherapy along with many professionals and volunteers who worked on other aspects of his recovery such as cognitive skills, music therapy, art therapy, speech and occupational therapy etc. and now a young man

has emerged with more skills than we would have dared imagine and a sense of humour that sustained all of us at ARBI.

After our years at ARBI Kylan then secured a place at Bow Valley College in Calgary and is now re-learning long unused computer skills at a very steady pace. He had been a student of political science when misfortune struck and his language skills are strong so he is always able to clearly articulate whatever he is feeling or thinking. Friends and strangers alike are charmed by his lovely caring personality.

He has said that he wants to be involved in this project as an encouragement to other people, not only people who have suffered a brain injury but all people who think they have met an impossible challenge. He also feels it will help him to organize his thoughts properly and perhaps meet new friends.

Kylan still needs his wheelchair, thrives in the company of others, adores children and has been able to turn his life into a life of being interested in the world around him and wanting to make that world smile. He has succeeded, and what an accomplishment.

**Fiona Fisher
Tutor
Bow Valley College
Calgary, Alberta**

Kylan Hunter

My name is Kylan Hunter. I used to write for my high school. I used to write about politics and music and I also used to really enjoy listening to music. 'Some say love it's like a river that drowns the tender reed' from 'The Rose' is one of my favourite lines from a song because it explains the feeling between human beings that love. Mostly because I am a drummer I like jazz but emotionally when it comes to emotions my favorite song is The Rose. My favourite restaurant to take a woman to would be Chianti's on 4th Street an excellent restaurant to take a date to. It's not the grub it's the Aura (ambience). Just you and your companion, they take excellent care of you. One excellent dish would be escargots with tortellini on the side and as well white Italian wine. After you eat you can always indulge in some heartfelt dancing in a tropical jungle setting right by the ocean in Tahiti in the South Pacific with waves crashing upon the white sandy beaches also surrounded by palm trees that tower up in the sky with pink flamingos standing on one leg up at the top of the trees. The water colour could be a combination of blue and green essence crashing on the rocks. Then it's time to go inside so I wish to be at home and I call for my date and hold on to her and instantly get scooped up by a cloud of mist and suddenly we appear back in the back yard. We went inside and had a glass of warm milk and went into the room with the entertainment centre and watched a bit of the tube. The most exciting thing in the room is the entertainment centre and the TV and looking at excellent comedy without swearing and that would be Three's Company with John Ritter, Renee Bonet and Chrissie Snow.

All the elemental rocks like obsidian and other dark coloured rocks like coal excited me and can be found in Drumheller. When you are entering D you drive through passes between ridges of cliffs also with hoodoos to the left and right. Boy was Drumheller ever invigorating. I strongly enjoyed writing this story because it made me gather up and splurge it out on to a few pieces of paper.

**Introduction
to
Veronika's
story**



When she isn't in art classes, speech lessons, or volunteering at the Aspen Family Network, Veronika comes to Bow Valley College to work with me on the SARAW program. She is a vibrant individual who has set her sights on improving her reading and writing skills – already with impressive progress. Words from Veronika's 'pen' flow more readily every week, matched by an increase in reading stamina and new vocabulary.

And she is more than just a good SARAW student! Veronika is active in her community and church and enjoys art, good food, and humour – the finer things in life! I have seen her approach her goals with honesty and hard work, and I believe these are some of the keys to her success.

Eternally positive, Veronika and her mother Hannah are always searching for new opportunities for development; they are currently looking into programs geared towards mathematics and accounting. I know that whatever she undertakes in the future will be given the same thoughtfulness and dedication I have seen her demonstrate here.

**Amy Montgomery
Tutor
Bow Valley College
Calgary, Alberta**

Veronika Koschewski

One Saturday morning, I was awakened by hunger. I was a frisky cat and I pay attention to me, only me! So, I saw a frail mouse who was in her last breath, I grabbed her and ate her up, delicious meal! My throat is dry and thirsty so I went to the stream to quench my thirst, I saw a blackbird sipping water too. I started to say to him, "How's it hanging?" The blackbird laughed so loud that he almost lost his control. The bird started to tell his story, a few months ago the creature talked about an interesting experience, "I was flying in the sky, no thought come to my mind then a big hawk was flying to catch me! I was trapped inside his mouth to serve me for supper with his whole family. I thought of something that the hawk would laugh about, I tickle him. He chuckled as I 'kitzel' him more, he laugh so hard that he let me go into freedom. I raced away from him quickly, and the hawk was still laughing until he knew that I escaped in peace."

We all laugh hard about that, now I know that the big creatures are scary enough but I think the giants have a soft spot too.

The blackbird and I said our good-bye for now. I'll be back!

**Introduction
to
Jim's
story**



Jim Laboucane has been a student, off and on, since 1994. Jim experiences a lot of health problems and has been required to take breaks from time to time. His writing experiences within the program have centered around current events. Jim enjoys reading the local newspapers and magazine articles. He will often write articles that express his opinion on stories in the news. This practice has helped his writing improve. He also reads CD rom books that are voice activated, allowing him to catch up on reading many classic pieces of literature.

**Don Kirkby
Instructor
Foundations for Independent Living Dept.
Capilano College
North Vancouver, British Columbia**

Jim Laboucane

No, I don't think Finna and Bjossa should be set free, because both have been in the aquarium for long. If you take them two whales out of their environment I don't think putting them back in the ocean is the answer. What if for some reason they can't live in that environment, and you don't know how long they have been living in the Aquarium? What if they need to hunt for food to survive in the ocean that could be a problem for them I think. In my opinion the whales should not be set free because I don't think they could survive attacks by other whales. If they were put in an ocean it may do them more harm than good. In my opinion some of the public has no idea what could happen to the whales if they were put back in the ocean.

**Introduction
to
Emile's
story**



Emile has been attending the SARAW program at Bow Valley College since May 2001. He graduated years ago from the special needs school system, but could not read or write. A waitress at his last dish-washing job started teaching Emile to read and write. When she left to take a teaching job, he came to SARAW to continue to learn.

He attends SARAW two hours a week. Over the past three years, Emile has had four different volunteer tutors. Everyone enjoys working with Emile. He has a wonderful sense of humour, and is a very hard worker. In addition to attending SARAW, he also attends a part time program at Mt. Royal College. In 2002 he was awarded a literacy bursary recognizing his commitment to upgrading his literacy skills.

**Belle Auld
SARAW Coordinator
Bow Valley College
Calgary, Alberta**

Emile Lemire

I used to go to Christine Meakel and Holy Angels for 2 or 3 years and I never learned anything, maybe just 2 or 3 words. Then after I went to Red Deer for 10 years. Then I learned how to do my dishwashing job and macramé and rug hooking, which became my hobbies. Dishwashing became my job.

After that in 1979 it was a nice day and I stopped for a cup of coffee and the owner talked to me about working as a dishwasher at his Fullers restaurant. He said it was good timing for me as it was one of his dishwasher's last night and he wanted me to come in at 5:00. He watched me work for a while and he said that I do a good job, so he hired me. After two years I then worked at Town and Country in Forest Lawn as a dishwasher. Then I worked at Tradewinds. They had lots of dishes because they had lots of weddings and conferences. It was lots of fun.

Then I went to O'Sullivan's for eight years. I saw lots of turnover of staff. Then I worked at Phil's Pancake House on Glenmore Trail for pretty near eight years.

After that I decided to do my laundry and I got hit by a car at a crosswalk. I was in the Rockyview Hospital for two months. Then I had to go in the Chinook Nursing home for five months. Not a pleasant place to go.

I applied to work at Topo's on Tuesday and got hired the next day. Theresa said I must be a real go getter. After two years the restaurant closed. After my leg healed up the people at Phil's said my leg was in a cast too long and I can no longer have you. Then I went to O'Sullivan's instead. Then a new manager at Phil's hired me and after two years the restaurant had to be renovated because the roof was leaking. The repairs took long and I decided to go to Casey's in Chinook for two and a half months and then it went broke. The same restaurant restarted as Patty's and I cleaned the bar. After that I worked at Tony Roma's on fourth street for about a month. After about four months I decided to go to Mount Royal College and Bow Valley College.

I learn computers at Mount Royal and reading and writing at Bow Valley. I also enjoy all the stuff I am learning and working on my crossword puzzles helps me learn to read and write. Sometime I look at the words at Dennys and at Chinook and I sound the letters out and read the words and I can also write them. All three things come together.

**Introduction
to
Danielle's
story**



Danielle loves writing in her journal or her diary of stories. She is a very creative artist and paints on rocks. She sells her work at craft sales. Danielle has 2 volunteer placements. She volunteers in our community activity program where she helps students learn basic computer skills and reads to small groups. Her other placement is at a retirement home and here she does the exercise program for the seniors and they love her. Danielle deals everyday with seizures and has been able to educate others and knows her limitations. She is often helping other students in the classroom and is very focused. Danielle is working to further her education and take a few new courses.

**Dianne Ward
Instructor
Thames Valley District
School Board
Woodstock, Ontario**

**Our
Computer
Talks
by**

Danielle Morris

We are using a special computer in our class called the SARAH. This computer will give you several words to choose from when spelling.

Reading these stories on the computers is interesting and we love to hear other peoples stories.

You can read them very slowly & get better at your reading and understanding what they are about. The computer always says my name when I sign in.

Writing stories you can correct any mistakes you make with the words on the computer. I enjoy doing the SAM Math Program because you start at the beginning and then move harder.

When I do this program it speaks back to me. Also you can move on to the next level and go from there!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I start off easy and move up as I understand it. When doing this I have already moved up to level 5. This can make everything very positive ! Or look at all the different skills that I have to do with Math ! Doing this helps me, learn, & practice!

In our program we have 12 people using the SARAW and everyone loves the computer.

One thing that means so much when I use the couputer math program I have to know the math before I can go on.

Doing these programs will make me feel more positive. Especially with moving out and living on my own. I was never very strong in school with this subject. Looking & practising this helps in many ways. One way to look at this is Practice makes Perfect! I am glad we have the SARAH in our program and hope that I can learn all the math. This computer helps everybody in our class.

**Introduction
to
Jackie's
story**



Jackie is new to the Woodstock area and says this is the best town she has ever lived in. She is involved in the special Olympic bowling and loves horseback riding. Jackie has a part-time job at the Bulk Barn and is really looking for full time work. Jackie attended the literacy conference last year in Hamilton and learned a lot about how to write stories and met a lot of other learners.

Jackie has two very special people who have made a difference in her life.

Marilyn and Jack - they work for the Von and spend every Tuesday with Jackie. They have made a big difference in Jackie as she is more outgoing and has a lot of self-confidence. Jackie is looking to move on with her education and prepare herself for independent living.

**Dianne Ward
Instructor
Thames Valley District
School Board
Woodstock, Ontario**

**Literacy
Conference
by**

Jackie Roswell

I was chosen from my class to attend the literacy Works Conference in Hamilton. I went with my teacher Dianne Ward for 3 days.

I had a great time at the Sheraton Hotel.

The workshop was great and I learned alot about different things.

I went swimming in the pool and the hot tub.

The hotel was big and I had a queen bed.

I got alot of pictures of some friends and the hotel. I attended 4 workshops.

1. workshop --How to choose a good book.
2. From self to a story.
3. Learning to how to lead and change your future.
4. Returning to learning.

I met some new friends and they were nice. I went to the Geritol Follis. It was funny in some parts of the show and took some pictures of the show.

I did some shopping for my parents, nephew, Jordan, niece, Hannah and my sister Joanne and Mark and my best friend Lori.

We ate alot of foods on Thursday. We had breakfast, cereal,danish, apples, muffins, drinks coffee, tea and orange juices.

For dinner we had a turkey dinner, with vegetables, cake, drinks, coffee, tea and milk.

For breakfast we had scrambled eggs, bacon, sausages, tomatoes, and drinks,

Lunch we had salads & lasagna, fruit cup coffee, tea and milk.

Dinner salad roastbeef dinner, vegetables, cake, and drinks are coffee, tea and milk.

This is a picture of myself and 1 of the dancers in the gerital follies.

I would love to go back to this conference sometime.

**Introduction
to
Marlene's
story**



Marlene Smith began studies in the Literacy Basic Skills Program in January 2003. During the past two years, Marlene has worked on developing the literacy and numeracy skills necessary to perform basic clerical tasks. She consistently demonstrated a high level of personal responsibility, initiative, and skill at peer teaching.

She is now employed as a Teacher's Assistant at one of our Adult Learning Centres.

**Richard W. Patz
Teacher
Literacy and Basic Skills
Community and Continuing Education
Hamilton-Wentworth District
School Board
Hamilton, Ontario**

Marlene Smith

My name is Marlene Smith. In January 2005, I got a new job at Red Hill School. I have to take three buses. I start at 9 a.m. The break is at 10 a.m. Lunch is at 11:30. Second break is at 1:30 and home time is 2:30 and I like it. I start Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. My teacher is Susan. I get pay for helping the teacher. The people are nice and quiet.

They say hi to me when I come in and they said they like my work and for helping them with their work. I help with their work. I help with their money. I was on cash (at the school snack shop) last Monday. I hope they keep me there.

**Introduction
to
Carol's
story**



Carol is one of the most hard working people I have ever known. Her days at the Rehab are filled with a lot of work. In the mornings she always volunteers to clean the bathrooms. Then she takes part in the kitchen program, where she helps with making lunch for other people. At lunchtime Carol will not rest until all the lunches are served. After she finally eats, she washes the dishes at the Rehab. By the time she is done it is time for literacy class, which she very much enjoys. After literacy she works on work projects or writes stories for the Rehab newsletter until it is time to go home.

**Anna Skalka
Program Manager
Rehabilitation Society of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta**

Carol Stuart

My name is Carol Stuart and I have two grandsons. One is Shane and the other is Cole. Shane is in grade one this year, and Cole is in kindergarten this year. They both like to play there with dogs outside. Sometimes I take them to the playground. The boys give me their pictures so I can show them at the Rehab to everyone there. Shane was born on my birthday, December 27. I have not seen them for 2 months. I will see them sometime down the road. They live in Edmonton, and I live in Calgary. I have two children, name Karen and my son is Cody. That is my big family and I love them dearly.

**Introduction
to
Michael's
story**



Michael has been coming to the SARAW Program for almost 2 years. Without the Program Michael couldn't have written his story. He has CP and is non verbal. He can answer yes or no questions. Coming to the SARAW Program lets Michael communicate and express himself.

On the Writing Program there is a Word Predict list, this is very beneficial to Michael as it helps him recognize words and it's easier to enter a number than having to type the whole word as it can be difficult for him due to his disability.

It has taken over a year for him to write about himself as we only attend 2 hours a week, but time is nothing - it's what you can achieve. Michael is more confident within himself and his family are very proud of him.

**Ann Hamilton
Tutor
Bow Valley College
Calgary, Alberta**

Mike Szabo

My name is Michael but i like to be called mike. I was born 1976 and i have a twin brother called Andrew. I have cp but that doesn't hold me back. I lived at home with my mom until a year ago i now live in a new home and share it with two other boys. I enjoy attending Bow valley college as it gives me my Independence and that makes me feel good. My life is good, i spend a lot of time meeting people but the most important thing to me is my family. I have also got a sister called Janey she is my strength I talk to her every day. she is the manager of a casino she works a lot of hours but she enjoys what She does; she recently bought a house which she shares with Tyler. My brother andrew has just moved into a new apartment with sarah. my mom is now on her own. I wish she could find someone to share her life with, as she sometimes gets lonely. I make sure i talk to her every day. My mom left for vagas on the weekend i hope she has a good time. My room mates and I are planning a overnight stay in Edminton at the Fantasy Land Hotel it will be cool. we are going to walk the mall and maybe pull a few chicks (ha ha).

**Introduction
to
Nancy's
story**



Nancy lives in an apartment with her husband in Woodstock. Nancy loves the social part of her building, joining in the potlucks, the bingos, and euchres. One of Nancy's greatest loves is her computer. She is always bringing in new programs and has donated a large print dictionary to the program.

Nancy has just found out she has won an essay contest and has been interviewed by our local newspaper. The topic she wrote on was Perspectives and she talks about her boss at work and how easy he makes her job. Nancy's essay has also been judged at the provincial level and she was the winner and will be travelling to Toronto to accept her award and \$300.00. Nancy is a delight to teach and her goals are further reading and math skills so she can do her own budgeting and continue on with her creative writing.

**Dianne Ward
Instructor
Thames Valley District
School Board
Woodstock, Ontario**

**Why Can't
I Learn
?????
by**

Nancy Taylor

"People with learning disabilities can learn but they learn in a different way and a different rate than most people"

Hi!!! my name is Nancy Taylor, I am 47 years old. When I was in kindergarten I started having some problems I could not follow my classmates in math and reading and I had to get help from my teacher. I had a learning disability and I still have it. My parents understood but a lot of people in the community do not understand. When I talk fast I stutter I need things written down. How was I going to get a job? I started at my work with someone called a job coach she helps me for the first month. Bob is my employer and with the help of my job coach, Bob understands my learning disabilities. I know I can be taught, I learn in a different way. My Perspective are I know I could not learn the way everyone else does but I learn in a different way. I've come a long way. I notice employers are hiring handicapped people. Bob is a special person and I have worked for 15 years at Miss Woodstock and this is what I do. ---- I wash the dishes in the dishwasher and some of the dishes with stains have to be soaked in the sink with bleach. I clean the bathrooms with a special cleaner and I also mop the stairs and the hall downstairs. My last job is to clean the kitchen floor and the main floor with bleach and soap. Oops !!! I also have to scrub all the pots. Bob has shown me how to do all of these jobs. I love going to work everyday and I'm starting to get to know all of my customers by name. I'm glad to be working in the community and hope to see you in the restaurant some day. I guess Bob has proved to me that I can learn.

Loving My Job

**Introduction
to
Trevor's
story**



I have known Trevor Woytko since 1997. He entered the SARAW program with the desire to write a book about accessibility issues in Vancouver and the lower mainland. He accomplished this and more. As a result of his writing practice and focused work in the program, Trevor was able to graduate into the Adult Basic Education program at Capilano College. He is currently taking English classes at the Grade 10 level and plans to get his grade twelve equivalency. Trevor has created his own website freedomseekerbc.tripod.com and encourages everyone he meets to visit his site and give him feedback. We believe that Trevor will reach his goal no matter how long it may take him.

**Don Kirkby
Instructor
Foundations for Independent Living Dept.
Capilano College
North Vancouver, British Columbia**

Trevor Woytko

On January 25, I did something that made me a true Vancouverite. I went to Whistler. Before this trip, I thought the only ways to enjoy the mountain was either by toboggan or sit-ski. It really felt weird to wear ski boots because of how heavy they were. When the boots were attached to skis, it was like my feet had become trees because of the length of the skis. The hardest thing to learn about skiing is how to ski uphill. I think that it should be tossed. It was a whole different story learning how to move. It was neat learning to slide. Skis are like puzzle pieces because you just click them into place and you are ready to go. For lunch I went up on the gondola and saw why this area is so popular. I thought my instructor had a few screws loose when he mentioned that we were going to ski down the mountain from mid-station. On this run I used a ski bra which helps by preventing skis from crossing. When I finished the run I felt very proud that I had completed the Olympic run and the opportunity to ski where the world does and to finally do something that before, I had only been a television spectator. There was a double side because this was the biggest thing that I had accomplished without my dad who died of cancer.

**Introduction
to
story**

I am very pleased to work with my student Joe (not his real name) in the College and University Preparatory Program (Upgrading) at the Lethbridge Community College Taber Campus. Joe started in our program last year, and is taking courses in reading, writing, math and computers. Joe, whose first language is Low German, grew up on a Mennonite colony in Mexico. In his community, education was not important because they did not need it to work on their farms. As a result, although Joe has many skills, he does not have much formal education.

Joe moved to Canada about five years ago. He worked on a farm until a back injury forced him to quit. He now wants to learn enough reading and writing so that he can train as a parts technician.

Joe uses the SARAW program to help him pronounce new words. Because English is his second language, he often finds words that are new to him. He enjoys being able to work with the SARAW program to help him pronounce new words. He also uses it to help him with his spelling and writing.

Joe has been a model student. He shows a great desire to learn, and has very good work habits. Joe is also involved in many advisory committees that help promote learning opportunities in our community. He shows others that they can, too, go back to school to learn to read and write.

**Connie Gross
Lead Instructor
Lethbridge Community College
Taber Campus, Alberta**

Anonymous Learner - 1

I started school when I was six years old and living in Mexico. I stopped school when I was twelve years old. At school I learned to read the bible, and to do some math. This schooling was good enough for my life in Mexico. But it was not good enough for living in Canada.

When we came from Mexico to Alberta in the late 90's, I could not speak or read any English at all. Then I started working on a farm, and I learned to speak English. After a couple of years, my wife and I started evening classes once a week. We learned to speak better, but the class was only one and a half-hours a week for six weeks. We didn't learn very much, but every bit helped us.

I was actually doing not too bad – until my back started giving me trouble. I decided to go back to school because life was so hard without reading and writing. I really like school, but I never knew school would be so hard. But I need to tell myself to take it one day at a time.

When I am done school, I would like to take the Parts Technician Apprenticeship through Lethbridge Community College. I hope to find a job as a Parts Technician.

**Introduction
to
story**

This student started in the SARAW program in September 2000. He wanted to learn to read and write so he could “write down his clients’ names when they make an appointment.” His support worker volunteered as his tutor. They have been working at SARAW once a week for two hours for just over four years.

By December 2000 his tutor reported that he was already doing some writing at work. By March 2002 he was able to read his horoscope in the paper for the first time. In February 2003 he had successfully read his story “My Weird Dream” - a language experience story that he had written, with his tutor’s help, using his own words.

As his tutor described, “he told me about a dream he had. After writing the dream story we began practicing to read. We worked at it until he had mastered the story. We practiced it every week for several weeks until he could read it with no difficulty. We were thrilled when he had accomplished this huge skill. We had tried other ways to read with no such luck but this was wonderful. Since this time we still practice other stories and return to them on occasion. We are both pleased with the progress he has made.”

**Belle Auld
SARAW Coordinator
Bow Valley College
Calgary Alberta**

Anonymous Learner - 2

Last night I had a weird dream. I was in a forest and someone gave me something to hide in my pocket. I see it on the ground and it was white rocks then it disappeared and the forest reappeared. The next thing I know is I'm on a plate. The plate came under me and lifted me into the sky and I could see rivers and lakes. I stopped and could see the clouds. I hovered above them. I came back to earth and stopped on a vending machine, I let go and fell to the ground.