

QUILL 1997 NLS Project -- Final Report  
Regional Newspaper for Adult Literacy Student

## **Final Report**

# Regional Newspaper for Adult Literacy Students

**A project of QUILL Network December 1996 - September 1997  
Funded by the National Literacy Secretariat  
Submitted by:**

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September 18, 1997**

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## QUICK FACTS

Lives & Times was a 10-month pilot project funded by the National Literacy Secretariat

- The project cost \$16,000 in grant money
- In kind donations were valued at almost \$11,000
- Four editions were produced in February, April, June & September
- There were 60 subscribers to Lives & Times
- 50% of subscribers were school board programs, networks and provincial organizations
- 43% of subscribers were located within the QUILL region
- 52% of subscribers were members of QUILL network
- \$4,400 of the costs were related to the administration of it being a pilot project
- Each issue cost about 70 cents in printing and distribution costs
- 1 000 issues were, printed for each edition
- 225 working guides were printed for each edition
- Programs received an average of 17 issues and 3 guides at a cost of about \$47.60/edition
- Each edition took about 75 hours staff time at a cost of about \$1,650 or \$16.50/paper
- Desktop layout vs. manual production costs about \$113 more, takes two people about 14 hours more, and relies on in kind donation from a desktop publisher worth about \$340

*If this were an ongoing network service with no changes to the way it was done during the pilot it could be done for about \$11,600*

## FINANCES

Total Amount of Grant – \$16,000

In kind donation of space, equipment and expertise valued at almost \$11,000

### Expenses (all figures rounded off to nearest dollar)

Salary/Benefits \$11,000

Printing/Distribution – \$2,800

Materials – \$300

Travel – \$800

Publicity – \$500

Equipment/Administration – \$600

### Printing/Distribution

Total Spent on 4 editions – \$2800

4,000 copies of papers/1,000 copies of guides

Printing Papers – \$1,300

Photos (development/film) – \$230

Printing Guides – \$320

Mailing (envelopes, labels, stamps) – \$770

Film output from DTP layout (one time) – \$180

<b>Cost per edition</b>	<b>\$700</b>
<b>Cost per copy</b>	<b>70 cents</b>

Programs received an average 17 copies/3 guides for each edition at a cost of

**\$11.90 or**

**\$47.60 for four editions a year**

*\*This does not cover staff wages or overhead costs*

## STAFF TIME

Project length: 500 hours over 10 months/four editions

### Time Breakdown

Starting up a project: 50 hours  
Winding down project: 50 hours  
\* Administration: 154 hours  
Interview/Writing: 130 hours  
Layout/Production: 76 hours  
Travel: 40 hours

\* Majority of administration time (about 100 hours) was due to this being a pilot project where many stats and figures had to be collated monthly for purpose of board reporting, grant report and final reports.

#### "Newspaper time" only:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Per edition</u>
Interviewing/Writing:	130 hours	32.5 hours
Travel:	40 hours	10 hours
Administration:	54 hours	13.5 hours
Layout/Production:	76 hours	19 hours
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TOTAL	300 hrs	75 hrs

<b>Total Staff hours per edition</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Total staff cost per edition</b>	<b>\$1,650</b>
<b>Total staff cost for 4 editions</b>	<b>\$6,600</b>

### Other Costs

Travel, materials, equipment, publicity                      \$2,200  
\*Staff time associated with being a pilot                      \$4,400  
\*If this were an ongoing network project this cost could be eliminated.

## LAYOUT PRODUCTION

Issues 1, 2 and 3 of Lives & Times were created by manual layout production. Issue 4 was created by desk-top layout production.

### Manual production

Eight waxed "dummy sheets" were used to paste stories, photos, graphics, page numbers, issue dates, mastheads, sub-heads and boxes. Staff person printed all stories from a computer in column widths needed for the pages. Photos were either developed in a dark room or produced on a scanner and then cut to fit the space on the page. A special type of tape was used to cut and stick around stories that needed to be boxed. It is a cut and paste process that was done at the staff person's home. Finished pages were then delivered to printer in Kincardine and finished papers were picked up three days later in Port Elgin.

#### Cost/Time involved per edition

1 staff person	19 hours	\$418
Photo development & scanned or printed	2 rolls of film 12 pictures	\$50
Eight waxed sheets	donated by printer	\$0 (\$16 value)
Tape for boxes, etc.	3 different sized rolls	\$15
Materials	ruler, utility knife, computer paper	\$10
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TOTAL		\$493 (\$16 in kind donation)

### Desktop layout production

This involved the staff person writing all stories on one disc and mailing to Southwestern Literacy Desktop Publishing Centre, Sarnia, where Kevin Churchill then formatted the stories for the right column width, font, etc. Staff person then drove to Sarnia for the day to work with Kevin on the layout. It was virtually the same cut and paste format, but all done on the computer using special software. Photos were developed and also mailed to Kevin and he scanned them directly onto the computer and they were inserted onto the right pages. All the mastheads, sub-heads, graphics and boxing was done on the screen. The final product was then formatted onto a disc and sent to a special printer that could output the data to film. The film product was eight pages the size of the actual printed page. The pages were then couriered back to Walkerton to the staff person. The turnaround time was about three days. Staff person then delivered film pages to the printer in Kincardine and finished product was picked up three days later in Port Elgin.

**Cost/Time involved**

1 staff person	13 hours	\$286
1 desktop publisher	20 hours in kind	\$0 (\$340 value)
Photo development	2 rolls	\$20
Travel to Sarnia	440 km	\$110
Film output pages	8 tabloid size	\$173
Materials	discs	\$4
Courier/mail costs		\$13
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	TOTAL	\$606 (\$340 in donation)

## RESOURCE GUIDES

Working guides were sent with each subscriber package. For the first issue, a guide was inserted into each paper. Quick feedback determined that programs didn't need that many copies of the guide. Future editions saw one guide sent for every five copies of the paper. The guide contained three pages of exercises that corresponded with stories that were in the paper. Exercises were designed to help the readers work on their reading, writing, spelling and comprehension skills. Answers were provided in the guide.

## EVALUATION SHEETS

An evaluation sheet was sent with each package. It was a one page sheet that was attached the working guide. It asked for feedback about each edition. It could be filled out by program coordinators, tutor or learners. Responses could be sent by mail, fax, or e-mail. People also suggested story ideas for future issues.

**Of the 22 different story ideas suggested over the 10 months, 45% were followed up.**

**Of the 60 different suggestions made about the paper, 43% were acted upon**

### Response Rate

Edition #1	5%
Edition #2	7%
Edition #3	1%
Edition #4	.05%



## SUBSCRIBERS

Approximately 100 literacy programs and organizations received copies of the first edition. Of those, 60 requested to be regular subscribers.

### Sectors

School board – 15 (25%)

Networks/Provincial organizations – 15 (25 %)

Community-based – 9 (15%)

\*Other – 9 (15%)

College – 8.(13%)

Workplace – 4 (7%)

\*Other included HRDC, JobLink, Social Service, individual

### Region

QUILL region – 43 (79%)

Outside QUILL region – 17 (28%)

### Members

QUILL members in 1997 – 31 (52%)

Non-QUILL members in 1997 – 29 (48%)

## SURVEY RESULTS

At the end of the pilot project, a final survey was sent to each subscriber. A self-addressed stamped envelope was included with each survey. Subscribers were asked questions about user fees, government funding, network involvement and changes to the paper.

There was a 23% response rate to the survey as of the survey deadline date.

### **Continued Service**

100% of respondents said they would like to continue to receive Lives & Times and 92% said they would like to keep receiving it at not cost to their program.

### **Subscription Fee**

78% of respondents said they would be willing to pay a subscription fee to receive the paper. Of those, 54% said they would pay between \$11-\$20, 27% said they would pay less than that and 18% said they would pay more (no more than \$30).

If the subscribers were paying a fee for the paper, 27% said they would expect changes. Some of those changes would to receive it more than 4 times a year; to include more stories from learners and include some generic stories about issues like health and safety in the workplace, or stories with a provincial scope.

### **Number of Copies**

If programs were able to photocopy the paper and resource guide, the average number of copies programs would want to receive was 6, however one program specifically said they would want 50 copies. All respondents said they would only need 1 copy of the resource guide.

However, if programs could have unlimited number of copies, the average program wanted 25 copies of the paper, but still said they would only need one copy of the guide.

Programs that said they would be willing to photocopy the paper to cut costs did point out that the paper would need to be a smaller size.

### **User fee for Students**

85% of respondents did not agree with charging the students for the paper.

*"I don't think the students should have to pay. It creates a barrier and many just wouldn't read it. If we want it to be accessible, it has to be free to learners."*

### **Resource Guide**

78% of respondents said they felt the resourcelworking guide was a necessary part of the newspaper, but again said only one master copy was necessary. Most felt it was a good tool to assist in a classroom or one-on-one tutoring session.

### **Cost-saving Ideas**

21% of respondents offered some cost-saving ideas for the newspaper.

Those ideas included. Paid advertising; corporate sponsors, photocopying the paper; and send one package to a program and letting them distribute copies to their other sites.

### **Network Responsibility**

78% of respondents felt the newspaper should the responsibility of the literacy network, even though some acknowledged that networks were already overburdened with tasks and not enough funding. Other suggested that programs within the network contribute to it on a rotating basis.

*"It makes sense to match the region covered by the newspaper to the network boundaries, but I think it should be a separate project with a staffperson dedicated to that alone."*

### **Government Responsibility**

85% of respondents said the government should continue to fund this service.

*"Definitely, it is a front line service."*

*"The provincial government is ignoring its financial responsibility to learners by not funding this service."*

*"The onus should be on the government."*

### **Financial Supplements**

50% of respondents suggested other financial means of supporting the newspaper.

Some suggestions were: large corporate sponsor; sell advertising; other grants, like Give the Gift of Literacy; members of QUILL contribute to the cost; subscription fees; money from literacy stamps.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

If this newspaper were to continue production, there are several recommendations I would make. These recommendations are based on:

1. My experience working on the project
  2. Feedback from evaluation sheets
  3. Responses from final survey
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1. Continue to print the editions 4 times a year – October, January, April, June
  2. Incorporate the paper into the regular service of the network
  3. Hire a person to work for 75 hours/edition or 300 hours/year
  4. Pay person at least \$20/hr and allow for another \$2/hr for employee/employer benefits
  5. Hire someone with a background in newspaper business
  6. Limit subscribers to about 60-80
  7. Limit number of copies to subscriber to a maximum of 50
  8. Keep the working guide, but limit it to two copies per subscriber
  9. Charge subscribers who are not members of QUILL \$15/year
  10. Change paper size so it is more easily photocopied (11 x 17 at max.)
  11. Charge programs that want their ad in the paper \$5 per issue
  12. Encourage more contributions from students and programs
  13. Encourage the provincial/federal governments to support at least 75% of costs
  14. Find a local printer who will charge no more than \$325 for 1 000 issues
  15. Find a one-time sponsor to buy computer equipment and software (\$6,000) that would support the paper staff person to do all layout on desktop. Provide training opportunity for the staff person to do this type of work.
  16. Keep the majority of stories local, but include some that are of a provincial and/or generic scope i.e. health issues, provincial elections, summer fun, etc.
  17. Encourage feedback in the form of letters to the editor rather than an evaluation sheet.
  18. Look at the possibility of other paid advertisers and sponsors
  19. Provide a host site that can help with in-kind donations such as photocopying, phone and fax lines.
  20. Subscribe to at least two daily newspapers that cover the area, that can provide story ideas and information.

## MATERIAL AVAILABLE

All the information provided in this report can be traced back to several sources. Copies of any of the following documents are available by contacting the project staff:

- Grant application for project
- Final grant report sent to National Literacy Secretariat
- Financial statements and budget from each month of the pilot project
- Copies of each edition of Lives & Times (February, April, June & September)
- Copies of each Resources Guide
- Copies of each evaluation sheet returned
- Copies of each final survey returned
- Subscriber list to Lives & Times

Send queries for any information to:

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