



Spring 2007 Volume 2 Issue 1

# Living THROUGH FRONTIER COLLEGE Literacy

## HOMework CLUB isn't just about work

“Toyo! Toyo! Boi!” To the children at the Multicultural Family Centre’s (MFC) African Children’s Homework Club in Burnaby, BC, these words signal the highlight of homework club – story time. Comfort, the Program Director and a story-teller of Nigerian descent, engages the children with stories told in simple English. Each story contains culturally specific characters and places and highlights a moral or cultural value.



The children, who come from a diverse range of African nations including Burundi, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya, enthusiastically join in the story-telling by wearing masks, acting out parts, singing and chanting.

Many of the children at these bi-weekly sessions have grown up in refugee camps and have very little school experience. Most of them have no prior knowledge of Canadian languages, customs or values. They need help learning to read, write, and speak English, and adjusting to the Canadian school system. The combination of new and

familiar at the MFC Homework Club helps the children bridge the gap between their old and new countries.

After sharing snacks prepared by an African Women’s Club, the tutors and learners get down to work. The older children ask questions about homework or practice reading. Younger children work on basic speaking and literacy skills. And, of course, there are learning games too.

The one-on-one attention of tutors makes a huge difference to the children.

“It has helped me a lot. I was never so good at reading. I want to thank them [the tutors]... I feel so confident in myself.” – Learner

And the tutors get to learn about the varied cultures of the children in the group, while sharing their love of literacy and learning. At the MFC, literacy and learning reach across cultures and bring tutors and learners together.

“The best part is helping the kids and seeing that they are appreciative of the idea of completing their homework... They remember skills, such as counting with your fingers, quickly and put them to use more and more in the right places as each week progresses.” – Volunteer ☒

Contributed by Frontier College volunteer Julie Ann Ames

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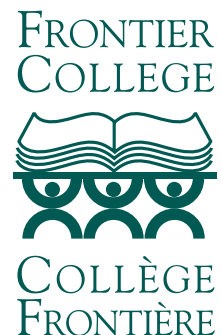
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# A Legacy For Literacy

In Fall 2006 Frontier College Foundation announced the launch of the Dr. Margaret Strang Society, acknowledging and celebrating donors who have made a commitment to include Frontier College in their wills.

After seeing the Society's launch announcement, Elizabeth LeWarne contacted Frontier College to advise us that she had left us a gift in her will. The Dr. Margaret Strang Society had its first member! Elizabeth's first contact with Frontier College was in 1989 when she received a

letter about the College's work. Being a teacher and having a lifelong passion for literacy, she liked the idea of making literacy accessible to everyone. Elizabeth decided to become a regular supporter.

A few years ago when Elizabeth was working with her accountant and lawyer creating her will she decided to make a lasting contribution to literacy and provide a legacy for all Canadians who wanted to learn to read. She included a gift to Frontier College among the charitable contributions in her will.

We are pleased to welcome Elizabeth as the inaugural member of the Dr. Margaret Strang Society. Her dedication and commitment



will help ensure that Frontier College's vision of literacy for all Canadians continues well into the future. ✕

Elizabeth LeWarne

## The Dr. Margaret Strang Society



The Society is named after Dr. Margaret Strang who, in

1929, was the first female Frontier College labourer-teacher to be part of the "homesteading" program. Riding on horseback between settlements, she was dedicated to bringing education to children in the remote communities of Northern Ontario. The Dr. Margaret Strang Society is a committed group of individuals who have remembered Frontier College in their wills. These people, like the Society's namesake, are dedicated to improving literacy for all Canadians.

### What are the Benefits of Membership?

- A personalized Dr. Margaret Strang Society certificate commemorating your membership
- A Dr. Margaret Strang Society lapel pin demonstrating your leadership in the mission to guarantee a promising future for Canadians of all ages
- Your name in the Dr. Margaret Strang Society public recognition book (with your permission)
- Publication of your name in Frontier College's annual report and on our website (with your permission)

You can become a member of the Dr. Margaret Strang Society by notifying us that you have included Frontier College in your will.

For more information on the **Dr. Margaret Strang Society please contact Sandra Pimpao at [spimpao@frontiercollege.ca](mailto:spimpao@frontiercollege.ca) or at 416-923-3591, ext. 336 (toll free 1-800-555-6523, ext. 336).**

*This information is provided for general information purposes only. It is not intended as a substitute for professional advice and assistance from your legal advisor, financial advisor or tax consultant. We recommend that you discuss your plans with your family and your legal advisor and/or financial advisor before proceeding with a bequest.*

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

Frontier College is a Canada-wide, volunteer-based, literacy organization. We teach people to read and write and we nurture an environment favourable to lifelong learning. Since 1899, we have been reaching out to people wherever they are and responding to their particular learning needs. We believe in literacy as a right and we work to achieve literacy for all.

[www.frontiercollege.ca](http://www.frontiercollege.ca)

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# Literacy Goes GREEN

Literacy has turned a shade of green at Woburn Junior Public School in Scarborough! Frontier College and Evergreen, a national environmental organization, have teamed up to deliver a pilot of the Ecoliteracy Enrichment Program for primary school students. Each week 25 children and four Frontier College tutors explore environmental topics in creative ways while working on reading, writing and communication skills.

The children, aged 8-11, eagerly follow instructions for activities from the Evergreen School Food Garden curriculum – sometimes getting their hands a bit dirty in the process!

Outdoors, the children have conducted experiments on the different types of soil found on their playground, made soil-building “compost tea” and clover seed balls for the school garden, and recorded their observations of the changes they see in the playground over the seasons.

Indoors, children enjoy local fruits or vegetables as a snack while they learn about seeds, farming and harvesting. After learning about seed-saving and bean diversity, the children decided to become *Bean Keepers*, helping some of Canada’s heritage bean species grow and

thrive into the future by caring for them in the school garden. They shared their new found knowledge with classmates by putting on a play about Bean Keepers.

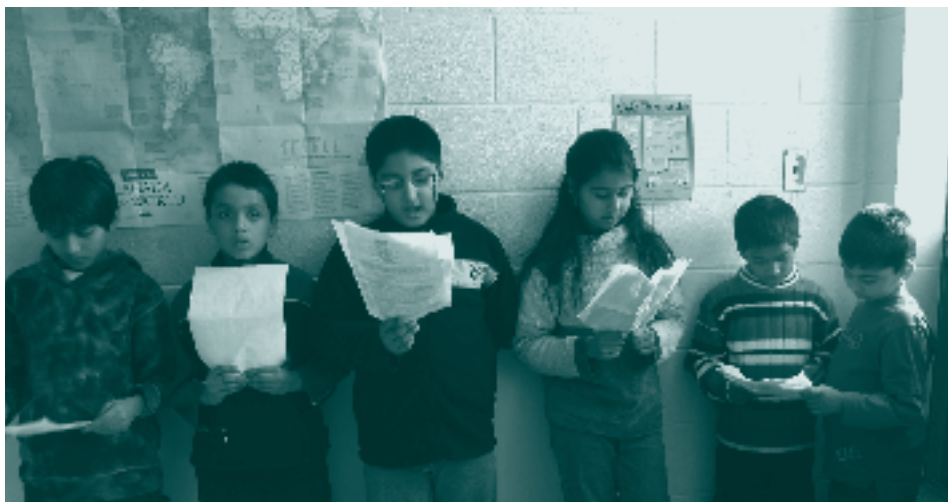
The Ecoliteracy Enrichment Program pilot partners Evergreen’s commitment to greening playgrounds and developing school food gardens

across Canada with Frontier College’s expertise in literacy development.

Together, we can provide children in higher-needs areas of the country with meaningful and accessible ways to enrich their literacy skills and their understanding and appreciation of the natural world around them. ✕

Holly McLellan  
Frontier College Staff Member

Holly McLellan has been involved with Frontier College since September 2003. She has been a campus volunteer tutor, an organizational team (OT) member, Summer Writing Camp Coordinator, Toronto Summer Program Coordinator and is now a part time Assistant Community Coordinator, working with Scarborough literacy programming and the Lieutenant Governor Aboriginal Literacy Summer Camps.



## Learning From Each Other

Last year, I wanted to live an intercultural experience and to get involved in my community. Thanks to Frontier College, I was able to achieve both of these by becoming a French as a second language tutor to newcomers. All the clients of Les petites mains, where I was volunteering, were Southeast Asian women. My first meetings, although very friendly,

were not easy. As I was the only male in the group, both learners and I were shy and a little uncomfortable. This made progress a little difficult. However, as weeks passed, we got to know each other better. From tutoring session to tutoring session and from one story to the other, we have developed trust and a friendly relationship. The workshops became

increasingly dynamic and sincere exchanges occurred. After six months, we were having heated discussions about women’s situations, marriage and religion! This turned out to be a true intercultural dialogue and a very neat experience. ✕

Saël Gagné-Ouellet  
Université de Montréal

# Honours and Awards

## FITZPATRICK AWARD

Frontier College is proud to announce that long-time partner CIBC is the recipient of the 2006



Fitzpatrick Award. CIBC has provided substantial leadership and funding to Frontier

College, helping to expand our university-student volunteer program, develop exciting new initiatives and raise awareness of Frontier College and the issues surrounding Canada's shockingly low literacy rate. Our sincere thanks to CIBC for their ongoing commitment to literacy.

## COMPANION AWARD

Congratulations also go to the newest Companion of Frontier College, Nora Farrell. Nora has been involved with



Frontier College since the early 1990's, first serving on the College Board, then leading the revitalization of the Frontier College Foundation and most recently serving as Chair of the Foundation Board. Thank you to Nora for her hard work, dedication, persistence and commitment to literacy. Her contributions and achievements will have a profound affect on the decades ahead.

## CAMPBELL & COMPANY AWARD

And last but not least, the Frontier College Foundation has been awarded the Campbell & Company Award for Excellence in Fundraising in Smaller Organizations by the international Association of Fundraising Professionals. AFP International has over 27,000 members in 180 chapters worldwide, and is dedicated to promoting and recognizing excellence in fundraising. Thank you for your support of literacy and Frontier College. We couldn't have been awarded this honour without you. ✕



## The First 100%



A new program of Frontier College emerged this September, one that I have personally watched blossom from nothing more than an intent to an entire entity, one that demonstrates how valuable, significant and supportive these programs are.

In four months, the drop-in homework club at St. Andrew's Recreation Centre has grown from this seed of hope into an elegant flower, as each week more children come and more tutors are recruited. One learner, who had been attending since the beginning came in one evening, sat down and opened up his books. He had a look on his face like he wanted to say something but was holding it back. He'd had a test the

previous week in a subject that he had been struggling with, so we had been helping him with the material. I approached this young learner and invited him to share how he had done on his test. He smiled, glanced up at me and then shouted out, "I got my first hundred on a test ever!!!" His excitement exceeded any feeling that I have ever experienced.

He had accomplished something that he believed he couldn't. All he needed was encouragement and a little practice. He did it, and he was so proud. I was so proud, and feel so fortunate to be able to be a part of the accomplishments that can be attained by these children, every day. It is truly an inspiration.

I look forward to watching this program continue to prosper, and produce these wonderful success stories that demonstrate the results of Frontier College literacy programs. ✕

*Ashley Avery  
Student Volunteer, Halifax*



# SCRABBLE®

## Corporations Square-off Over SCRABBLE®

Have you ever wondered how to pluralize “xylem”? How about the top score possible for the word “quinsy”?

These burning questions as well as many others were answered on Tuesday, March 27 in CBC’s Barbara Frum Atrium when 39 teams squared-off to see who would win Frontier College’s third annual SCRABBLE® Night in Canada Corporate Challenge fundraiser, presented by TSX Group.

After much “geodesy” and “quisling” with some “ytterbium” thrown in for good measure, CNW Group’s Newsmakers defeated the Scotiabank Nerduques to win the TSX Cup.

Conference winners were Miller Thomson LLP (Legal), Scotiabank Nerduques (Banking), CNW Group (Accounting & Data Services), Measha Brueggergosman’s team (Diversified) and Scotia Capital (Capital Markets & Wealth Management).

The Three Stars winners with the top individual scores were David Nelson from CNW Group, Eric Keen from PricewaterhouseCoopers and Andrea Rudnick from Dundee

Securities Corporation.

Interested in the 2008 SCRABBLE® Night in Canada Corporate Challenge? The date will be announced soon at [www.scrabblenightincanada.ca](http://www.scrabblenightincanada.ca), Corporate Challenge. Grab your dictionaries and start practicing today.

Frontier College would like to thank TSX Group, ONEX, iress and Hasbro for their support of the 2007 SCRABBLE® Night in Canada Corporate Challenge.

Don’t be “soporific”! Enter your organization in Frontier College’s 2008 SCRABBLE® Night in Canada Corporate Challenge today by e-mailing [aschindler@frontiercollege.ca](mailto:aschindler@frontiercollege.ca).



## SCRABBLE®-offs Break Out Across the Country

SCRABBLE® tiles hit the racks in homes and communities across Canada in February and March as more than 250 people participated in Frontier College’s SCRABBLE® Night in Canada Friends & Family Challenge, proudly presented by Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life.

The total amount of money raised isn’t in yet, but it will all support Frontier College’s literacy programs across the country. Thank you to

everyone who participated.

Worried that you’ve missed out on a great event? Don’t want to wait until next February to have a SCRABBLE® party? Frontier College’s SCRABBLE® Night in Canada Friends & Family Challenge can be held any time of year to raise money for Frontier College’s literacy programs. Just register online at [www.scrabblenightincanada.ca](http://www.scrabblenightincanada.ca), set a date and ask your friends and family to help you raise money.

Frontier College would like to especially thank Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life for supporting the 2007 SCRABBLE® Night in Canada Friends and Family Challenge. ✕



# Every Place a Learning Place

Since 1899 Frontier College Labourer-Teachers (LTs) have been working alongside the people they're teaching, sharing their experiences and their hardships. In the early years that meant the railroad, mines or logging camps.

Today farmers on approximately 20 agricultural operations in south-western Ontario invite Frontier College LTs to work in the fields alongside migrant farm workers like Maria.

Maria is from Chihuahua province in Mexico. For the past eleven years, she has been working on apple farms in Ontario. Like many of her fellow workers, she is widowed and works to support her teenage daughter and young son back home. Maria finds it very difficult to be separated from her children for the eight months she spends in Canada each year, but it is what she must do to support them. The work is repetitive and exhausting, and ordinarily would offer very few opportunities to learn or practice English. Except, this year, one of her co-workers is a Frontier College LT.

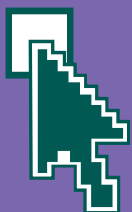
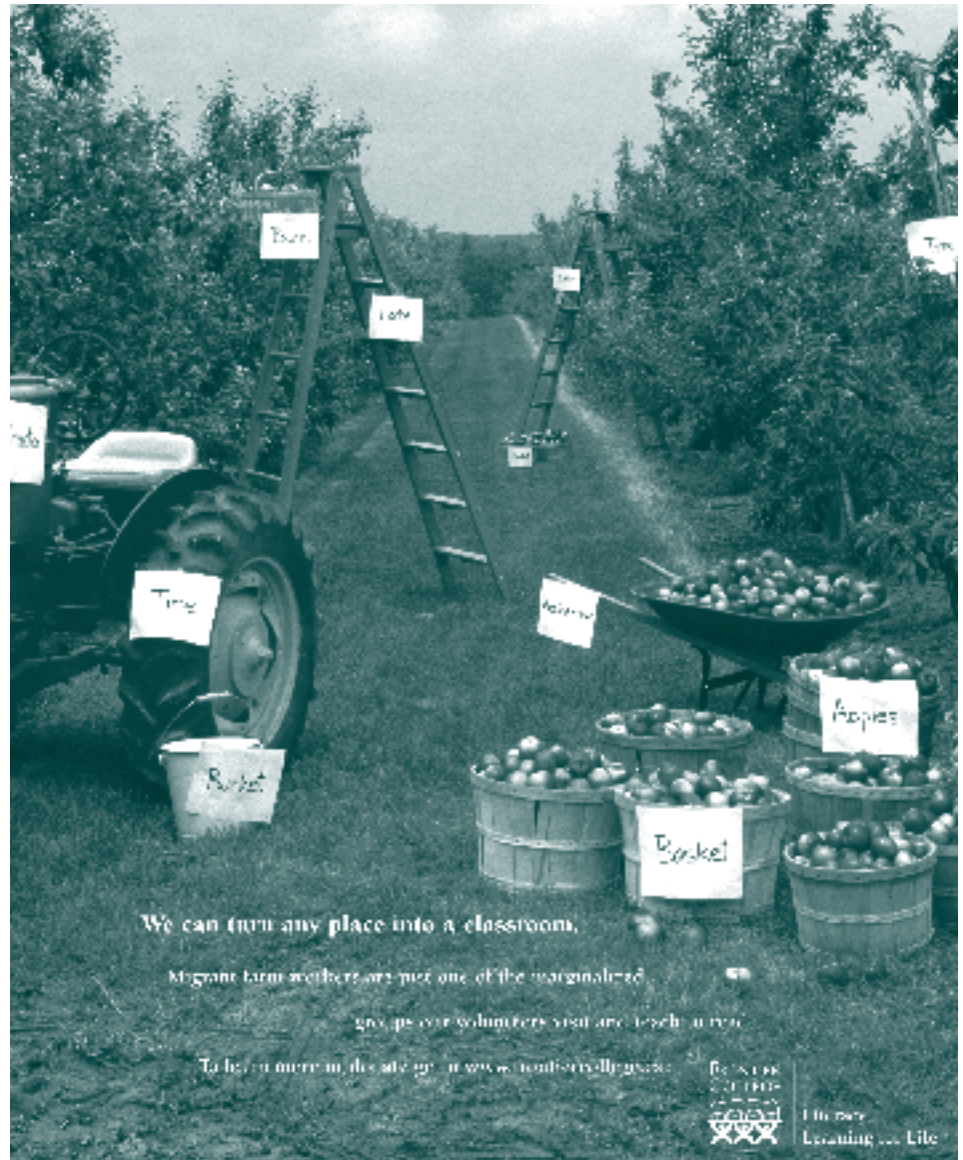
Frontier College LTs find learning opportunities everywhere. In the field, in the bunkhouse and on their days off, Maria and the other workers improve their English skills with the help and guidance of their LT tutor. Over the summer Maria learns how to communicate better with her supervisor, and how to deal with bank tellers – a necessity for sending money home. Maria

also gains a sense of dignity and pride, as she becomes more comfortable speaking up for herself and for other workers.

LTs and workers take learning into the community, too. Last year some of them hosted an amateur stage night in Leamington, Ontario, attracting aspiring performers and

comedians. There were also soccer tournaments and visits to attractions like Niagara Falls.

As we look ahead to the summer of 2007, a new crop of LTs is being selected, trained and placed in the fields to continue the Frontier College tradition of making every place a learning place. ❖



**NEW!**  
**E-newsletter**

In December 2006 Frontier College Foundation launched our e-newsletter – Frontier College Foundation – Update. This electronic publication, which will go out about three times per year, will keep you informed about goings on at Frontier College. Want to be the first to hear what's happening at Frontier College? Go to [www.frontiercollegefoundation.ca](http://www.frontiercollegefoundation.ca) and click on "E-newsletter" to subscribe.