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New literacy tutors needed

THE TIMES NOVEMBER 1, 2011

Recruiting is underway for volunteers to train as literacy tutors. Upon completion of the free training, the tutors are matched up with adult learners.

These learners come from all walks of life, and may be seeking a tutor for a variety of reasons. They may wish to improve their basic literacy skills, or they may want to be better equipped to help their children with their homework. Other learners are immigrants wanting to improve their conversation skills in English.

Tutors are placed in upgrading classrooms, or may work with a small group of students, or may work individually with a learner on a weekly basis. The tutoring relationship continues for as long as both partners are willing. In some cases, learner and tutor have worked together for a few years and have developed a significant bond.

"It can be similar to many other community outreach programs," says program co-ordinator Marci Bulloch. "People will go into not realizing the close relationship they might develop with someone in the community that they would never have otherwise crossed paths with. It becomes a very valuable relationship."

Learners who come to the program are looking to make important changes in their lives. Tutors work with them on areas of reading, writing, math, spoken English or computer skills. It is the learners who decide what they want to work on, and the tutors receive support to help the learners reach their goals.

What are the qualities of a good tutor? Patience, a willingness to work towards another person's goals, and a sense of humour. Tutors become known in the community as OWLs (Outreach Workers for Literacy) and are an integral part of a program called Community Access to Literacy and Learning (CALL). The Chilliwack Learning Community Society provides this program at no cost to the learner.

Training for tutors is provided free of charge and includes a supervised practicum. This allows the tutor to put in place the skills and information learned through the training and allows the tutors to go into their

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placement feeling confident in their abilities.

The training takes place over three sessions, followed by a practicum and a fourth session as follow-up.

? For more information contact CALL co-ordinator Marci Bulloch at 604-792-0025 ext. 2434, or marcib@chilliwacklearning.com.

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