



Early Literacy Alliance of Waterloo Region

Partnering for early literacy. Ensuring a stronger future.

ELAWR Meeting Minute for May 26, 2014

Idea Exchange Clemens Mill Branch, 50 Saginaw Parkway, Galt

Present: Wanda Kampijan, Helen Kelly, Laura Dick, Machel Denison, Robyn VanderZee, Janelle Wenger, Teri Sousa, Cathy Scott, Cameron Dearlove, Maria Milne, Kim Krueger-Kischak, Gabriele Croft, Chris Beck, Colette Moffat, Joanne Stronge, Michelle Banfield (visitor).

Regrets: Kelly Kipfer, Katie Jackman, Tierney Hunter, Samantha Burns, Joanne Davis, Mary Trottier, Shana Hayhurst, Maria Ashworth.

1. Welcome and Introductions: Kim introduced a visitor to our ELAWR meeting today, Michelle Banfield, DECE at Avenue Rd P.S. with WRDSB.
2. Reviewed and approved March 26th meeting minutes.
3. Budget update - Gabriele and Kim are in the process of purchasing insurance for ELAWR, so that we can move forward with event, conference and workshop planning. A reasonable rate was offered by Ayr Farmer's Mutual Insurance and we are awaiting the policy and final cost. Since our last meeting (March 26th), we had only one expense related to ELAWR Café on April 30th (\$69.97), so our balance is \$2083.84.
In addition 2 years' Weebly pro and domain name expenses are pending very soon (\$139.70) prepaid by Wanda Kampijan.
4. Subcommittee updates
 - ELAWR café –positive responses were received from 40 participants at the April 30th ELAWR Café. A survey monkey was sent out afterwards. A panel of 6 community service providers spoke on “5 Everyday Ways to promote Early Literacy” and spoke on key messages of “Talk, Sing, Read, Write, Play”.
 - Website/Facebook: We currently have 75 Facebook followers and continue to have over 2000 unique visitors every month to our website. Wanda asked all members to review their organizational descriptions by June 30th to ensure accuracy, check web links, and update as needed.

- Promotions- About 1000 brochures have been distributed to date. Brochures have been well received. Contact Kim if you need additional family brochures.
- Core planning – discussed the need for insurance and considered bringing forward suggestion of longer meetings in the future. (From 2 hours to 2 ½ hours in order to allow sub-committee work time). As a group we voted to try this for Sept and November meetings this year – i.e. our time will change to 1 to 3:30 pm.
- Conference- planning is moving forward with many quality presentations proposed. We have accepted nine 2-hour proposals and six 1-hour presentations. Keynote is Chaya Kulkarni, from HSC who will speak about the relationship between Mental Health and Language and Literacy. A few vendor checks have been received, confirming their involvement. Sam is working on the brochure with assistance from other committee members. Gabriele has asked KA for support to manage Eventbrite again. Update: registration will be available online after June 23rd.
- Family Literacy Day – ELAWR was chosen as the next planner/coordinator of FLD in Waterloo. We have a subcommittee of 9 members available to assist Kim and Laura D. who are CoChairing the group. Since this is the first time for ELAWR to take on this task, the subcommittee will have a pre-planning meeting on June 4th at 10 am at the YMCA OEYC.

5. Discussion to determine future priorities for ELAWR.

The group divided into 4 smaller groups in order to discuss future priorities of ELAWR.

As it is anticipated that we will apply for funding through the Lynda Silvester award from the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation this fall, this brainstorming will assist us in setting priorities. Currently we feel established enough (5+ years) and ready to take further steps to develop our goals/objectives and vision.

Kim has established communication with Laura Manning from the Hallman Foundation, and feels we may be a good fit. Gabriele reviewed ELAWR's terms of reference with committee members to familiarize all with Objectives in 4 major areas: sharing info, promoting literacy, educating and advocating. See T of Ref for more info.

To brainstorm future priorities, groups were asked to consider the questions: 1) What are we doing well with regard to Early Literacy and 2) What do we want to do with Early Literacy?

Brainstorming results (grouped according to objectives)

- A. **Sharing Information**- we are doing well with reaching professionals, but need to do more to reach families; be involved with “pop up” literacy opportunities – that distribute information around the community – e.g. supermarkets, malls, table top with activity in strategic location such as Target, Toys R Us, arenas, rec centres; continue to de-mystify “literacy” (can be a “scary” word for some parents); ensure website info is current; connect with other

groups in Waterloo Region that may be of mutual benefit – e.g. Positive Parenting; Crime Prevention Council; do we want an active “blog”? Do we want to be involved with Pinterest? – possibly need funding for a dedicated person to expand in this way

- B. **Promotion** – we should be doing more with website, have commercials on TV and radio (and Vine?); we need to make website more family friendly; need all promotions to be “family friendly”. Can we maximize “filming”?; how do we reach those who don’t know about us?; insert ELAWR brochure into new resource guide for parents (through Public Health) ; consider inserting brochure for Kindergarten information nights; increase events where we do promotion; Create a poster with 5 key areas similar to our banner – include Why this is important; consider promotion during January (part of FLD) on Local TV ; develop a professional video – with a segment on each of the 5 target areas; use YouTube – place on website; order more brochures = \$, make buckslips = \$; create data collection tool – see how many times ELAWR “touches” individuals (include # conference registrants; booth visits; hit on website, in-kind hours of committee members) – Track these stats annually to provide cumulative information that can be helpful for grant writing. This will demonstrate the value of the alliance. Create resources with stories/testimonials/quotes from a variety of sources; (e.g. “Because I read...” campaign)
 - C. **Education** – need to educate families around literacy and learning. How can we get families to cafés? Ensure that cafes and other formal education venues include a face-to-face connection and information sharing (i.e. to differentiate from webinars, online courses) Consider education for the ELAWR committee – to work optimally, promote literacy in the community; share info with other literacy groups in other communities; link with other EL groups in other areas – conference calls, share resources, e.g. connect at Niagara Literacy Conference.
 - D. **Advocacy** – assign one committee member to search out grant opportunities and develop business connections. Linking up with other community groups to “create a literacy movement/campaign” “National campaign”; consider working with ABC Canada – Craig Alexander is an advocate from the business community who is concerned about the long-term impact of literacy; explore different touch points in the community, who are not on ELAWR; what does advocacy for early literacy really mean – what should we be doing?
 - E. **Other** – how to achieve sustainable funding? Where could funding come from? Should we be doing direct programming? Could we start a volunteer program? Volunteers could be a source of mentorship to parent re how to read/model literacy strategies. How to sustain and grow the committee?
6. Member organization updates

a) Our Place OEYC– Wanda noted that there will be “blocked programs” of 8 days in a row during the summer. “Together for a Better Start” Program for newcomer families will help prep kids for school; Family Math program will run in the summer. “Transition to Kindergarten” program (formerly Kdg Readiness) will operate. July/Aug calendar will be out soon.

b) WCDSB – Colette noted the final group of schools offering FDk are set to go this Sept. She has been involved with orientation evenings and Welcome to Kindergarten program. Colette is also working with teams on a new resource which emphasizes the transition for FDk to Gr 1. She is also connecting teams with info from the ministry connected to “How Does Learning Happen?” Colette noted there is a site at www.peopleforeducation.ca which describes “How does education work” in multiple languages.

c) Let’s Read – Laura noted that author visit has been set up. There are new partners in the Let’s Read program – the Literacy Group and the Museum.

d) WPL- It was noted that the summer reading club is being launched. WPL has received a grant to hire a WLU Co-op student to help with 1:1 literacy support. FDk impact on library services is being studied. The “maker movement” which stresses innovation/play/imagination is affecting WPL and other library summer programs.

e) Idea Exchange (formerly known as CPL) is also embracing the “maker movement”. Helen noted the National theme “Eureka” (TD sponsored) and on June 20th there will be Marisol, a lego station, Big Weave and robotics featured, and lots of “hands on” making and creating activities for children.

f) Public Health- Terri noted that the parent guide is being revised. (print target = June 1st) 6,000 booklets are distributed to parents of newborns every year. The ELAWR parent brochure will be linked within the new guide. “Comfort-Play-Teach” which focuses on self-regulation is a key message.

g) R of W Home Child Care- Joanne noted that Home child care will launch live next week from the “One List”, which means that fee-paying parents now have access to Home Child care services along with those who are subsidized. Rates are being restructured to correspond to hours of care, age of child, etc.

h) LINC – Maria noted that sites shut down for the summer. LINC offers 3 parent sessions to prepare parents for their child’s entry to school.

i) Family Centre – Cameron noted that KPL has a partnership with the Family Centre one day/week. The last Tuesday of each month has a “food truck fundraiser”.

j) Early Literacy Specialist (OEYC) – Kim noted that she will attend Children’s Planning Table later this week. CPT has released a new dashboard – Kim will advocate the inclusion of ELAWR on this platform. Kim noted key topic areas: Transition to School; “How does learning happen?” (with deeper exploration of the area of Expression). Kim noted that Dr. Joanne Lee at Laurier is looking at research in the area of Literacy/Numeracy – how does Technology with young children affect literacy? Kim asked ELAWR members to consider other areas of research interest, and she will send a survey in the future about this. Kim noted that Shana Hayhurst, who has been the coordinator of Baby Connections for the past 3 years, will be leaving the

position this week. Kim will be the contact in the interim if there are any questions about Baby Connections. Kim is being interviewed for a new parenting program this fall on Rogers TV.

k) KWHabilitation – Chris noted that KWHab has moved into the new building at Ottawa and King streets. Work currently focuses on Transition to School meetings.

l) Strong Start – Mabelle noted “Letters, Sounds and Words” is wrapping up in the next few weeks. “Getting Ready for School” in currently 8 sites in Wat Region is adding 4 new sites for 2015. There is also a new volunteer position opening for material assembly to support LSW programming, requiring ½-1 day/week.

m) WRDSB – Cathy noted that Board SLPs are wrapping up Transition meetings and focusing on Kindergarten Language evaluations.

n) ROWLibrary – Janelle noted that branches are gearing up for Summer Reading programs. They will have 2 summer students this year (one to support programs for 2-5 year olds and one for 6+ year olds) – 7 week programs. In addition to developing maker space kits, lego kits, and accessing more building supplies, they have literacy-related nutrition kits with conversation starters.

o) KPL – Robyn noted that KPL is busy now that the new Central Library is opening very soon, with expanded children’s programs, and new staff to be hired. It will have a different look with play area for children. Summer reading program will have a “drop in” format with “maker” materials as noted by other libraries. A new children’s website will be launched soon as well.

p) KidsAbility – Gabriele commented on recent fundraising for KA by the Foundation (Radiothon and numerous “Fun runs”). ASD forum flyer was circulated taking place on June 6th. Summer group programs (Early Language, Preschool Language and Phonology groups) will run during the summer – 8 sessions over 2-3 weeks for the most part. ELAWR brochures were distributed to about 350 families during “May is Speech and Hearing Month” promotion during one week in May.

7. Future meetings (determined by Doodle poll responses)

- Tuesday, September 23, 1:00-3:30 p.m., location to be determined
- Tuesday, November 11, 1:00-3:30 p.m., location to be determined

Recorded by G Croft