



Early Literacy Alliance of Waterloo Region

Partnering for early literacy. Ensuring a stronger future.

ELAWR Meeting Minutes - Monday, Sep 26th, 2016, 1 – 3:30 p.m.

Family Centre– 65 Hanson, Kitchener, Room 1023

Present: Kim Krueger-Kischak, Gabriele Croft, Laura Dick, Wanda Kampijan, Kelly Kipfer, Joanne Davis, Katherine White, Stephanie Denison, Nancy Duncan, Maria Milne, Chris Beck, Maria Andre-Gedja, Marci Nicolaisen, Corinne Cameron, Amber Holmes, Machel Denison, Sarah Harjee
Visitors: Deb Homuth, Juliet Lomax (student)
Regrets: Joanne Stronge, Cathy Scott, Laura Reed, Jaime Griffis, Fauzia Mazhar, Tierney Hunter, Brenda Mak, Jill Watson

1. Welcome and Introductions – Regular members were welcomed and new members and visitors were introduced: Corinne Cameron-Executive Director of Parent Child Resource Centre, Salvation Army; Nancy Duncan, Supervisor of Programming, ROW Public Library; Sarah Harjee, Region of Waterloo Public Health (replacing Rebecca Dahle); In addition, Kelly Kipfer (WPL) has returned to ELAWR following a one-year leave, and Deb Homuth (Conestoga College) and Juliet Lomax (student) attended as visitors today.
2. May 31st meeting minutes were reviewed and approved with the exception of correction of p.4 (5th point) –Last sentence should read: Amber “is doing a presentation at Our Place Family Resource centre and OEYC on temperaments and multiple intelligences”.
3. Budget update - Gabriele noted that we have about \$17,500 remaining in the Lynda Silvester grant with \$14,000 left for advocacy plan and about \$3,500 in pre-approved payments to Barefoot Creative (Communications plan). The ELAWR general account is currently sitting at \$7,541.08. One sponsorship donation for the conference was provided by Ayr Mutual for \$150 and vendor tables have generated \$240 in income since the last meeting.
4. Update from Core Planning Subcommittee

– LS Hallman foundation – Children’s Initiative Application Sept 2016

ELAWR has submitted a proposal to Hallman Foundation under the Children’s Initiative Program. (Deadline was Sept 12, 2016). The writing of the proposal was shared by Kim Krueger-Kischak and Jaime Griffis, with input from the Core Planning Committee. The main impetus for the request was to further the recommendation from our strategic plan to “build a health care distribution channel for early literacy”. Input was sought from Public Health and the proposal was co-authored with Overlap Associates who have significant experience using the Design Thinking

Process which involves stakeholder input right from the start, working towards possible solutions to a problem, and using ongoing consultation and “testing”. Concrete “hands on” materials are used, and throughout a “de-risking process” is used. Overlap has had experience working with the health sector in the past. WPL has offered to be the lead agency from a financial perspective for the grant administration. We should hear the outcome in late November/early December. It was suggested that this proposal be placed in the Members only section of the ELAWR website.

5. Subcommittee updates

- -Communications and Marketing Committee – we are currently in Week 2 “Play with me” of the TALK, PLAY, READ, SING campaign. 2700 postcards were dropped in 4 distinct neighbourhoods of Waterloo Region that showed large #s of children vulnerable/at risk for school readiness at school entry. EDI data was used to identify the areas of greatest need. For this postal drop the areas targeted were: Kitchener: Vanier/Rockway ; Waterloo: Columbia/Lakeshore; Cambridge: North Galt/Elgin Park; townships: Wellesley Rural South . All 2700 households will receive the 4 postcards, one delivered/week. Families are encouraged to visit the website to watch videos and look at information articles posted. Twitter, and Facebook are also sharing messages. All members are encouraged to post through their own websites/facebook/social media as possible.

Wanda was thanked for her role in preparing the website pages for each of the targeted weeks. Each page includes an online version of the postcard, 2 videos (with the exception of Sing) and 2 articles for further information.

The committee worked hard over the summer to prepare 2 videos each of TALK, PLAY, READ but were unable to develop SING due to lack of funds. Local families participated in the filming and are featured in hundreds of still photos, available for ELAWR’s promotional use in the future.

Posters were ordered and distributed at the meeting. Members were encouraged to take 3-10 each and post in locations to target families that may not be currently accessing literacy programs (e.g. grocery stores, rec centres, community centres, bathroom stalls at movie theatre, etc).

CTV responded to the media press release and interviewed Kim and some families regarding the importance of early literacy – it was aired on CTV evening news Sept 19th.

Wanda thanked those who sent info articles, and links to populate the website, but would appreciate more info articles from members to continually update web content.

Idea; Members are asked to track where campaign has been promoted (e.g. agency website, social media, poster placements, etc.) so we can track for evaluation purposes. Possibly put a spread sheet in members section.

Gabriele has tracked website usage over past few weeks and found a huge surge from pre-campaign week : 219 unique visitors and 1147 page views. End of week 1: 916 unique visitors and 2,044 page views. Tracking to continue, including FB and You Tube views.

Idea: the Record may wish to do a story (through Let's Read contact). Members are encouraged to use connections for further promotion of the campaign.

-Social Media and Website – Wanda and Kim with support from Barefoot Creative (Karen Aldous) have worked diligently to develop content for Campaign pages, promote on FB and Twitter. Thanks to all who provided info for this phase of promotion. Please forward additional articles and links to Wanda. It would be helpful to include in subject line the relevant campaign message and one summary line to aid in posting.

- Advocacy Plan – the Advocacy committee met in June. Following a facilitated meeting it became clear that a critical piece of learning should be incorporated Story Telling – i.e. members to learn how to create a meaningful, impactful story about the importance of early literacy and use appropriately with targeted audiences. Capacity Canada has leaders in this area, and we have been in touch with Megan Conway to see if they can support us in advocacy training. She has suggested that we create a systems map to help identify who key players are, and also what agencies/groups are missing from the early literacy table. To this end we are likely to have a few lead-up meetings prior to the official training – likely ½ day in late winter/early spring for all ELAWR members. Details to follow. It is anticipated that we will open up the Storytelling workshop to other agencies/partners in Waterloo.

-Conference Planning – The committee worked through June, July and August to prepare the registration material, line up speakers, sort out venue, engage vendors, etc. A half-day conference will take place on October 29th (8:00 – 12:45) at Our Place OEYC in Kitchener (new venue!) Please see www.elawr.org for more information. Members are asked to help promote this educational event and encourage colleagues to attend. Members have been asked to help if possible (e.g. room set up on Friday afternoon from 3 pm, Oct 28th, clean up after the event, introduce speakers, etc.) Please let Gabriele or Kim know if you can help.

-Family Literacy Day: First planning meeting will occur next Monday, Oct 3rd at 2 pm at Country Hills. More helpers are wanted – please contact Laura Dick. The mall event will take place on January 29 (Conestoga Mall). There will be a story walk in the mall organized by Let's Read program. On January 28th, a HIVE (a digital literacy network) event will occur at the mall in conjunction with FLD.

Idea: Consider hosting a digital literacy workshop locally – use Accelerator Centre as a venue, and involve technology sector as appropriate.

6. Community updates about early literacy

- Children's Planning Table –Kim is the official ELAWR rep at CPT meetings and events, though many others from ELAWR are also present, representing their own agencies. It is great to have an ongoing awareness for all of early literacy issues. Next CPT meeting- Sept 27th.
- Kim was asked to represent ELAWR at a learning opportunity hosted by Hallman foundation "Mapping Moving Trains" – trainers were from the Tamarack Institute, and discussed importance of collective impact, how organizations connect together, and how we work together. RE literacy: are we really shifting the needle on literacy rates in WR? Why not? How can we do a better job? How to fill gaps? How do we overlap? Is there duplication of effort? Kim felt the training related well to our advocacy role. Machel who also attended, felt that there was strong support for multisectoral representation to effect change.
- Early Literacy Specialist update – Kim recently attended Hanen's Learning Language and Loving It training program – good connections with the Kindergarten program and learning documents (How does learning happen?)

7. Member organization updates

-Our Place Family Resource and EYC - 1) Wanda noted that there are 3 satellite sites, and similar approaches are being developed at all sites – there is some knowledge transfer and mentoring occurring between sites. OEYCs are entering consultation with the municipality (where the funding will shift in 2018). 2) Amber is now in her second year of the grant-funded position. Last year dealt with relationship building, pedagogical exploration, looking at how we prepare kids to learn now, and how we can build on this. She continues to work on developing a community of learning and will be featured as one of the workshop options at the ELAWR Conference. Amber noted there is an exhibit of interest in Toronto (Royal York Hotel) "The wonder of Learning" – on until November 13, open free to ECEs.

-Let's READ – Laura noted that the one book/one community program has chosen "Edmund Unravels" by Andrew Kolb (local author) as this year's feature. It was recently launched at KidsPark. TD provided a grant to give away about 500 books of this title.

-WPL – Kelly noted that their strategic plan includes a "cohesive early learning plan". All staff are trained in the 5 early literacy practices. Staff wear badges to support the 5 messages. Play centres rotate monthly. Families receive calendars with literacy ideas and "Explore Play Learn" messages.

-Project READ Literacy Network – Joanne noted that Get Set Learn programs are ready to go at 3 sites. The Victoria Hills site is also open to families not on Ontario Works (a new initiative). A new curriculum has been developed. They continue to work with their consultant on issues such as sustainability, and are hoping to receive grant funding to do an environmental scan of early literacy programs. Their grandparent literacy program recently received an award from ABC Canada. As a result, they will be featured on CTV in the “local heroes” segment and have had coverage from CBC and Rogers Daytime programs. (Kudos!)

-LINC-Maria indicated that registration was very busy this fall, and all LINC programs are currently full. A wait list now exists, and they are hopeful for expansion in the spring. Among new participants, they have seen a rise in families who struggle with literacy, including many mothers who have never attended school.

-KWHabilitation – Chris noted ongoing transition meetings for children going to schools. Caseloads range from 15-35 children / consultant with 4 to 10 sites served. Programs are becoming more inclusive, in that all children in a centre are being served through joint workshops and availability for consultation to all in-centre children (not just those on caseload).

-ROWL – Nancy noted that they organized a story walk at the recent Apple Butter and Cheese community festival. Many ROWL staff will attend the ELAWR conference this fall – she wondered if organizers might consider taping sessions and posting them on our website? In programming, library staff are incorporating more “loose parts” at the end of story time. ROWL has recently restructured. Long distances are a challenge.

-Conestoga College – Deb has a broad portfolio and is currently collaborating with other groups for local poverty reduction, with an emphasis on indigenous population issues. She is planning to work with 10-12 people to be family literacy leaders in their own communities. She is planning to refresh the family literacy program at C.C., enhancing the online learning opportunities and ensuring that participants are primarily based in Ontario (currently the number from Alberta is high).

-U of Waterloo Infant Labs – Katherine and Stephanie continue to recruit families for their research and offer books as a “thank you” for participation.

-Parent and Child Resource Centre, Salvation Army – Corinne noted summer programs were at full capacity with a focus on helping kids get ready for school.

-Strong Start – Mabelle noted that Letters, Sounds and Words program has launched its volunteer training sessions. Volunteers can receive free training (2 sessions of 2 hours each) for a minimum commitment of ½ hour/week for 10 weeks. Programs happen at schools and are game and activity based. The Get Ready for School programs are ready to go in January at 16 sites (same ones as last year). They will be hiring soon for part-time instructors (Jan-June during school day).

-Public Health – Sarah noted the 4 libraries in WR collaborated with PH to develop promotional material and make available to every newborn a library card. “Making story time part of every day” is a message that they are promoting.

-Kidsability – Gabriele described referral and assessment process for speech and language at KA. There are care paths developed for birth to 30 month children with a high emphasis on parent training and coaching as well as a number of Evidence-based care paths developed for over 30 month children as needed. Service can include individual, group, parent training, consultation to others as appropriate. She showed the Hanen calendar produced annually with literacy activities for parents and professionals.

Baby Connections: - Training is now 2 ½ hours – both new facilitators and refresher programs are offered several times/year. Recently underwent a developmental evaluation and are incorporating new ideas in their training. BC is always looking for new partner organizations.

-Marci – now a student (no longer at Highland Stirling Community Centre) is interested in maintaining connections in ELAWR

-Maria A-G – has been working with Community Justice Initiative (youth, new Canadians) and working on starting up a recreation program and a homework club

8. Future meetings : Thursday November 24th ,2016 (at the Family Centre)
Thursday Feb 2nd ,2017 (at the WRDSB office)
Monday March 27th
Thursday May 25th