



## **READ Saskatoon Celebrates Literacy!**

**SASKATOON** (September 7, 2011) – International Literacy Day will be celebrated in Saskatoon tomorrow and READ Saskatoon will mark the occasion with energy and a sense of frustration. For over 30 years READ Saskatoon has been providing a safe way for people to learn; they have developed successful strategies to engage trained volunteers in the delivery of free adult and family literacy programs. Yet, after thirty years, the organization continues to rely on year-to-year grants to provide, what has been declared a fundamental human right.

Executive Director, Sheryl Harrow says, “The ability to use and understand information is fundamental to daily life at work, at home and in the community. A 2003 study found that among Saskatchewan adults aged 16 to 65, approximately 33% struggle with the literacy skill demands of a knowledge society. What few people know is that 80% of the people who rely on READ Saskatoon’s literacy services are employed. In fact, they are underemployed with most of them earning less than \$20,000 per year.”

Literacy influences our health and well-being, our sense of personal security, and participation in our community and society. In the words of one adult learner, Dorothy, “READ Saskatoon is the only one that has helped me get past Dick and Jane. It is the best part of my life.”

Like Dorothy, we need to make sure that people in Saskatchewan can read, write and perform numeracy well enough to increase their knowledge, access jobs, and contribute to the growth of our province.

READ Saskatoon Chair, Carm Michalenko says: “Donations, sponsorships and fundraising, like Friday’s READ Saskatoon PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy, with sponsors like Affinity Credit Union and Kinsmen Club of Saskatoon, ensures we provide year round support to our learning community. Our objective is to have literacy programs available for families and adults when they need us. Grants can only take us so far. We are determined to broaden our self-generated revenue fund.”

Currently READ Saskatoon self-generates 20% of its budget. A recent organizational business plan aims at READ Saskatoon doubling its activities and operations by 2020. READ Saskatoon’s business plan can be viewed at [www.READSaskatoon.com](http://www.READSaskatoon.com).

**About READ Saskatoon:**

READ Saskatoon is recognized as a leader, providing quality literacy programs to individuals, families and workplaces. For over thirty years, the organization has provided free literacy programs through a small group of highly - qualified staff and trained dedicated volunteers. Last year, this combination resulted in:

- 860 adult learners received free literacy support through a literacy program or from a trained volunteer literacy tutor.
- 221 trained volunteers provide over 31,000 hours and \$470,000 of free literacy support to individuals and our community.
- 964 children and 842 parents and/or caregivers participated in free Family Literacy programs.
- 254 staff from schools, preschools, daycares, business and community based organizations received free Family Literacy Training.
- Workplace Literacy and Employee Development Workshops were embraced and delivered at 19 Saskatoon businesses.

**For more information, please contact:**

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