

SALT SPRING LITERACY

COMMUNITY LITERACY INVENTORY

ANALYSIS

It is a difficult chore to do an analysis when you know there is pertinent information lacking. While we have no data from SD 64, we have been told that they have a GED program, at least two Literacy Coordinators, peer tutors, a listing of private tutors, and they offer ESL sessions to supplement the curriculum for foreign students. School policy is to integrate literacy into all class work, although this is not a program with a name, and there is no remedial program, per se. We have also been told that the private tutors do not want their names disseminated widely, as at least some of them are retired teachers and do not want to take on a large number of students.

We have no particulars on any of this. However, what little we know does provide some background and is taken into consideration in this analysis. There may be a gap here, but we cannot determine it without further information.

There is one glaring gap that shows up in the analysis. It would seem that a great deal of effort is expended on getting the youngsters prepared for schooling, and a moderate amount of help is offered once they are in school (although this is a surmise based on hearsay, as we lack the data), and we know that there is help available for resumes and job searches immediately after graduation. There is also the GED program for those who did not complete their schooling in the normal time frame.

However, once they get a job and are in the workforce, there is virtually nothing in the way of help with literacy. The library offers an amazing amount on on-line programs, but the unspoken prerequisite is computer competency. We list a number of "Computer Access" sites, but only one gives any instruction. Community Education offers computer classes at a price many working parents might find difficult to budget.

Community Services has cited 19 people in the non-employed sector who are candidates for one-on-one, tutor to pupil, help with literacy, adding that they also need help with basic finances. There is definitely a gap here, and this is a difficult one, as the prevailing attitude among them is to distrust and avoid any kind of organized society. Anecdotally, we were told that some of the Community Service workers who came to our launch were told quite bluntly that they were no longer to be trusted as they were hob-knobbing with the people who run society.

There also appears to be another gap in the adult, working population. For those with low literacy skills, the only thing we can find offered is the Library's free basic computer instruction. If they have difficulty reading written material, this is of no use to them.

We also see a third gap in the adult population among those with adequate levels of literacy, although not a severe gap. If these people are to maintain and/or hone their literacy skills, they must resort to computer technology or other services offered by the library, which means they must be self-starters -- no small feat for working parents.

Our senior population appears to be well served. There are programs for socializing, transportation, home support, hot meals delivered, a supervised bathing program, and library materials brought to the door. Seniors have access to computer instruction and all the programs available with computer knowledge.

SUMMARY: While there may be gaps in the middle-school and hi school age groups, we have no data to support this. The data does indicate a definite gap in services available to the adult population, working or unemployed, at all levels of literacy competency.

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