



“MAKIN’ IT WORK” Framework for an Employer-Specific Essential Skills Strategy

Bridging Education with Employment

“.... getting low-income and disadvantaged workers into good jobs is no easy task....Bob Giloth describes the ‘disconnection between the hardest to employ and the mainstream economy’ as two separate ‘worlds’. “One world is made up of business culture and expectations that hard work is rewarded. The other world is made up of people who have been marginalized by the mainstream over generations and face the labour market with cynicism, loss of hope and few positive expectations. Bridging these worlds is an enormous challenge”.

Bob Giloth, Anne E. Casey Foundation ‘Jobs Initiative’.

“Many citizens of Saint John are not able to participate in the workforce because they lack the requisite skills, or they face other barriers – such as lack of available childcare – to entering the labour market. There is a need for a greater range of programs that assist individuals in achieving both their education goals (literacy, GED, workplace essential skills) and employment goals (through short-term employer specific training, job preparation and work placements)”. *Benefits Blueprint Energizing Sustainable Communities, Workforce Expansion Initiative, 2008*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Self-sufficiency for New Brunswickers means opportunities to contribute and achieve prosperity and self-reliance¹. However significant numbers of individuals who could potentially be added to the labour force pool have low levels of education and are struggling to find adequate employment and make ends meet.

The purpose of “**Makin’ it Work**” **Framework for An Employer-Specific Essential Skills Strategy** is to develop and implement a workforce partnership model that addresses the needs of both employers and job seekers with low levels of education². This initiative draws heavily on strong local leadership. It is a component of Saint John’s poverty reduction strategy led by Vibrant Communities Saint John (VCSJ) and the Workforce Action Steering Committee of Enterprise Saint John.

The workforce partnership model draws on successful programs in Canada and United States. This framework describes a **three year demonstration initiative** with the Saint John Learning Exchange. The components are as follows:

- Employers are integral to the process;
- Essential skills training is geared to requirements of a particular job;
- Work placements are part of the training;
- Individual is employed at living wage level (see appendix B);
- Supports for the individual are provided during and after the program; and
- Model is continually strengthened through ongoing evaluation.

VCSJ is in its fourth year of working with the community on a poverty reduction strategy, led by a leadership roundtable of business, three levels of government, community organizations and individuals living in poverty. VCSJ focuses on influencing policy changes and responsive investments for children, youth and single parent families, particularly those living in low-income neighbourhoods. Removing barriers to workforce participation and supporting vibrant neighbourhoods are two primary themes.

Funding to develop this framework was provided to VCSJ by the New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour.

¹ Province of New Brunswick, Our Action Plan to Be Self-Sufficient in New Brunswick, 2007

² The nine essential skills are reading, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, thinking, computer use, and continuous learning. Source: www.hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills
The term, Makin’ it Work, was adopted from the Makin’ It Work! Program in St. John’s, Newfoundland.

2. LEADERSHIP TEAM

An enthusiastic Leadership Team of individuals representing employers (6), business organizations (1), government (5), unions (2), educational institutions (2) and community organizations (2) was established in the spring of 2008. Its purpose is to guide the development of the model, identify challenges, promote connections to human and financial resources and champion the model in their sector and community.

The Leadership Team is chaired by the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Business at UNBSJ. Please see Appendix A for list of members.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of **Makin' it Work: An Employer-Specific Essential Skills Strategy** are as follows:

- Develop and operationalize a workforce partnership model as a demonstration project for Saint John that:
 - Meets the needs of employers challenged to fill entry level positions with a living wage;
 - Provide additional pathways for adults challenged by low levels of education;
 - Builds on the assets of individuals and organizations;
 - Utilizes workplace essential skills training targeted to the needs of specific employers;
 - Involves a small number of employers and approximately 24 individuals annually;
 - Draws from the expertise of a Leadership Team of local partners representing employers, unions, provincial government, educational institutions and community organizations.
- Promote the model to potential employers and others.
- Ensure adequate funding resources are in place for the three year demonstration project
- Provide for ongoing evaluation and learning; and
- Document and share learnings.

4. EMPLOYERS

TARGET

Employers benefit from well trained employees, particularly individuals who are committed to lifelong learning. The demonstration initiative will work with employers seeking to expand their operations and/or facing challenges in hiring or retaining qualified staff. It is expected that the employers would have specific openings now or in the near future; an employer requiring only a few employees could partner with other employers with similar training needs. The openings would involve full-time hours, (over 25 hours a week) and at a living wage level (starting at \$10/hour or within a few months of working). It will illustrate linking essential skills knowledge-based training with content and practical experience in a short period of time.

ROLE OF PARTICIPATING EMPLOYERS

It is essential that the demonstration project meet the needs of the employer as they are integral to success of the demonstration initiative. It is expected that the time commitment from employers will be matched with the benefits of the initiative.

Involvement of employers includes the following:

Initially

- Participate in workplace assessments to identify skill areas for inclusion in the essential skills curriculum;
- Provide input into the training to ensure it integrates job specific and practical skills;
- Participate in the selection process of candidates for the training; the employer would identify specific requirements which may affect the selection process such as driver's license, criminal record check or physical capabilities.

During training

- Provide a work placement component, integrated throughout the training program;
- Provide support (i.e. a buddy system) for the individual; this increases an individual's sense of belonging and helps to negotiate problems in the workplace including relationships with colleagues and supervisors;
- Ensures that all current employees understand the initiative;

Following

- Offers living wage full-time employment with an acceptable level of stability;
- Recognizes that limited shift work is an advantage in this stage of development;

- Hires the individual(s) if the candidate attains the requirements of the position and if both the employer and individual are in agreement on this next step. Opportunities for advancement and employee benefits are an advantage.

BENEFITS

Research on best practices identified a number of benefits to employers who participate in an employer-specific training approach. They include:

- Reduction in the cost and risk to employers of bringing on new employees due to reduction in employee turnover;
- Trained, screened and interested employees who have the skills to work with the employer should contribute to increased productivity among employees;
- Improved workplace morale (opportunity to be a more caring company) as current employees are able to contribute to the initiative;
- Increased profitability; in Newfoundland's initiative 57% of businesses reported an increase in business activity (increased sales, exports, contracts etc).

Best practices show that employers have also experienced internal advantages such as increased value given to training, changes to internal policies, and clearer job and organizational expectations. Many employers described advantages in the networking that occurs as a result of their involvement.

Although a high school education and post-secondary training is advantageous to creating an effective workforce, not all individuals follow this path. An outcome of the demonstration initiative is to illustrate additional pathways for individuals with low levels of education to participate in the workforce and not be limited by the lack of a GED or high school diploma³. Individuals participating in this initiative may receive the inspiration and confidence to take advantage of continuous learning opportunities in the future.

OPPORTUNITIES: PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT

Individual conversations with members of the Leadership Team, particularly with employers and unions, have been helpful in understanding the challenges employers face, their recruitment needs, and potential for possible partnerships. Consideration is being given to the feasibility of working with a group of employers who share requirements for specific essential skills. This could be advantageous to employers and provide participants with a broad range of options.

³ **GED:** the General Education Development diploma is recognized as meeting high school graduation requirements for the purpose of employment and further education. GED tests measure knowledge in five different areas: [language arts and writing](#); [social studies](#); [science](#); [language arts and reading](#); and [mathematics](#). One must be 19 years of age to write GED tests.

Coordinating the availability of employment opportunities with the length of the training program will be essential as will matching the expectations of skill levels required from the individual to the needs of the employer. One of the immediate advantages of the demonstration initiative is that the work placement can be viewed as a partial probationary period.

Members of the Leadership Team will continue to assist in identifying prospective employers as they promote this approach with colleagues, internally and externally.

5. PARTICIPANTS - LEARNERS

TARGET

The demonstration project will involve approximately 24 unemployed adults annually, with or without a high school or the equivalent who desire to work but are experiencing barriers to entering the workforce.

The Learning Exchange builds on the assets of an individual and supports learners working at different paces. In this initiative, they will utilize prior learning, which helps an individual identify their strengths. Individuals will work on what they need, and at their own pace. This means some may be ready to do a work placement before others.

UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUAL BARRIERS

Individuals living in poverty face many challenges in seeking employment. Each person has a unique story involving both their challenges strengths. Finding affordable childcare and transportation, dealing with family challenges, addiction issues, low levels of education, lack of self-confidence and difficulty meeting basic needs such as an adequate diet all have a significant impact on individuals living in poverty and the kind of supports they require to move forward. For individuals without a high school diploma (or GED), it can even be more challenging. Achieving a GED can be a long process (possibly without success) and can be frustrating, particularly for those with past negative experiences in school. Many individuals seek employment as quickly as possible.

A common issue facing most individuals is the lack of appropriate bridges or networks to link them into the labour force. The participation of many partners will contribute to building additional pathways for individuals to move out of poverty.

NEIGHBOURHOOD APPROACH

The poverty rate in the City of Saint John is 20.8% (2006 Statistics Canada LICO before taxes). Further exacerbating this unhealthy situation is that Saint John, according to a report of the Canadian Council on Social Development, has the highest concentration of neighbourhood poverty of any urban centre in Canada.

Data shows that our most vulnerable individuals and families live in five priority neighbourhoods in Saint John. These are neighbourhoods with high levels of poverty and high numbers of single parents. Persistent and widening gaps of income, employment, assets and school success continue to exist. The five priority neighbourhoods are: Crescent Valley, the Old North End, Lower West Side, Deep South End and the Village (uptown) areas.

*Kids do well when their families do well and families do better when they live in supportive neighbourhoods and communities*⁴. This initiative can build on the growing community engagement in the five priority neighbourhoods particularly in Crescent Valley and the Old North End, due to the efforts of Vibrant Communities and many other partners.

A disconnect exists between the realities of residents not engaged in the workforce and businesses unable to find employees. In the Crescent Valley and Old North End neighbourhoods, there are a number of employers who may be interested in participating in this demonstration initiative.

RECRUITMENT AND REFERRAL

Reaching individuals to inform them of opportunities, to encourage their participation and to support next steps requires creative and innovative approaches. It is an opportunity for government and community organizations to collaborate with an active outreach approach at the neighbourhood level to engage those who are often hardest to reach.

A recruitment strategy will be developed and implemented through a partnership involving Social Development (identifying case manager), Post Secondary Education, Training and Labour (identifying employment counsellor), Learning Exchange, Enterprise Saint John, Neighbourhood Groups and Vibrant Communities. Individuals interested in participating in this initiative will be required to meet with a case manager from Social Development or an employment counsellor from Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour.

⁴ Founding principle of the Annie E. Casey Foundation in United States, www.aecf.org

The final step in the recruitment strategy will be made easier once employers have been identified so that individuals can pursue the career path of interest.

Next steps include the following:

- Bring together community partners to develop concise messages and materials with the advice of a marketing consultant;
- Meet with learners at the Learning Exchange and in other locations to better understand what approach will work;
- Promote the initiative among case managers and employment counsellors;
- Utilize VCSJ's Neighbourhood Education to Employment Committee to guide the work in each neighbourhood⁵;
- Meet with residents in each neighbourhood.

ONGOING MENTORING

Studies and experience illustrate that people subsequently leave their jobs because of problems both inside and outside the workplace. These include some of the barriers mentioned above such as childcare or transportation difficulties or work-related problems with hours of work or relationships on the job.

Ongoing mentoring is integral to this initiative and can take different forms. Workplace mentors can help new employees develop a sense of belonging to their place of work; help negotiate problems in the workplace and support career advancement opportunities. Mentoring in the community, through the Learning Exchange, case managers and employment counsellors provides support during and after the training, assisting an individual in addressing any challenges and providing ongoing encouragement.

6. DELIVERY AGENCY: SAINT JOHN LEARNING EXCHANGE

The Saint John Learning Exchange brings a wealth of experience in basic adult education principles and practices with over 20 years of program delivery in assisting adults to improve their reading and numeracy skills and for GED preparation. See Appendix C for a listing of their programs.

Over the last two years, the Learning Exchange has begun to focus on providing workplace essential skills training and working with employers, through support from

⁵ This committee is made up of individuals from government, non-profit and neighbourhood organizations. It has been active over the last eighteen months connecting individuals in neighbourhoods to educational and employment resources and services. Some activities have met with success but more work is required.

Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour. In addition, one of their staff has been trained in the delivery of essential skills. The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, through their Adult Literacy Services Branch, are making available a curriculum in essential skills training.

The Learning Exchange provides numerous services for a wide range of individuals from various backgrounds and socioeconomic levels. Their comprehensive approach and level of expertise provides the ideal environment to demonstrate an employer-specific workplace essential skills approach coupled with the necessary personal supports and followup.

7. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

An evaluation framework provides for continual learning and refinement of the strategy. Bridging the Gap Program in Newfoundland and Labrador utilized evaluation throughout the initiative to integrate their findings immediately into improving the program. This approach optimizes the utility and effectiveness of the work.

- What are we trying to do?
- How will we know if we did what we said we would do?
- How can we get the information we need?
- What does the information tell us?
- How can we use the information?

The demonstration initiative will define good practice that works for an individual with a specific set of disadvantages, the benefits for an employer and overall, what is needed to strengthen the initiative. Some of the measures of success include:

- economic gains for the employer;
- increase in essential skills and academic skills for the individual;
- effectiveness of short-term training (and clarification of short-term training);
- individual workforce participation barriers addressed;
- job satisfaction, commitment and long term employment at living wage jobs;
- impact of collaborative community effort;
- cost saving where participants moving from being an “expense” to an “income generator” in the form of tax revenue; and
- progress and overall impact for the individual.

An evaluation framework will be developed and operationalized. The Provincial department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, University of New Brunswick – Saint John campus, and New Brunswick Community College will contribute their expertise to guiding the evaluation. An evaluation committee will develop the framework which includes:

- Finalizing the indicators (needs and goals) for employees, employers, and government partner;

- Identifying tools and methods to assess impact;
- Clarifying process for on-going analysis and feedback; and
- Overseeing the evaluation.

8. RESOURCES

New resources, reallocating existing resources and partnerships are required for this three year demonstration initiative. (See page 13 for the three year budget). The request for new resources is being submitted to Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour (PETL) in Fredericton who have indicated their support for this three year demonstration initiative.

The Learning Exchange will require additional resources for an essential skills instructor, tools and other related expenses to conduct the demonstration initiative. The instructor and other staff of the Learning Exchange will provide an assessment of each candidate (literacy levels etc), although expertise in the area of Prior Learning Assessment (PLAR) will be provided by PETL. The Learning Exchange will provide the personal supports required during the training program and in the followup, coordinating efforts with case managers from Social Development and other partners.

An employment coordinator (from PETL) will work closely with employers. The individual will assist with the recruitment of employers, the assessment of essential skills required by the employer (and relating to the Learning Exchange's curriculum), and coordination of their involvement in selection of candidates, in the provision of work placements, and in the possible hiring of individuals.

The success of this initiative is based on meeting the needs of employers. Enterprise Saint John is seeking support from PETL for a resource dedicated to work half-time with this initiative and half-time on workplace training. For the Learning Exchange, this position would enhance its work with employers. It would provide for a workplace diagnostic audit that looks at the overall management system including a job analysis. It would contribute to meeting the essential skills required for the targeted positions. The benefits of this position would encourage the involvement of other employers.

While a committee of partners will oversee the evaluation resources are required to conduct the evaluation and document the learnings.

9. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

At a recent roundtable on literacy, Judith Maxwell from Canadian Policy Research Networks stated that the literacy ‘tipping point’ will be reached when⁶:

- literacy is linked to labour shortages, weak productivity, inequality and social exclusion;
- a cost-benefit analysis is developed and best practices are documented; and
- a vision of what can be achieved through investments in high-quality literacy programs captures the imagination of Canadians.

Saint John is working towards the tipping point as illustrated by the outcomes:

Short Term Outcomes

- Community and business leadership and support;
- An evaluation framework in place to assess the impact;
- Employers operationalizing the model;
- Strategy to recruit candidates is successful with first intake of learners.

Medium Term Outcomes

- Employer-Specific Workplace Essential Skills Training Model finalized;
- Saint John Learning Exchange provides effective delivery of initiative;
- Individuals are employed and meeting the needs of employers;
- Demonstration initiative includes an emphasis at the neighbourhood level;
- Learnings from the evaluation shared and incorporated into the initiative;
- Growing interest from both employers and unemployed individuals;
- Essential skills training considered as an alternative to high school completion;
- Increased recognition of training as a return on investment;
- Documentation to showcase demonstration initiative; and
- Decision to champion (or not) continuation of initiative.

Long Term Outcomes

- High percentage of individuals are employed;
- Sustainable funding secured;
- Essential skills training recognized as an alternative to other requirements such as high school. Completion; and
- Pathways to employment are enhanced.

⁶ *Reaching for the Tipping Point in Literacy* was the title of a roundtable in 2008 of multi-sector partners organized by the Canadian Council on Learning

10. BUDGET FOR THREE YEAR DEMONSTRATION INITIATIVE

Budget for Three Years

Note: This includes two intakes annually of approximately twelve learners each and approximately 20 weeks each intake which includes three weeks of placement (interspersed) throughout the time.

Revenue	First Year	Second Year	Third Year
Post Secondary Education Training and Labour	\$83,000	\$77,800	\$79,036
Total	\$83,000	\$77,800	\$79,036
Expenses			
Workplace essential skills Instructor	40,000	41,200	42,436
Facility	10,000	10,000	10,000
Telephone	1,500	1,600	1,600
Training and curriculum development	5,000	5,000	5,000
Marketing (1,500 honourarium - professional advice)	3,000	1,000	1,000
Materials (including office supplies)	5,000	5,000	5,000
Equipment	4,500	----	----
Evaluation	10,000	10,000	10,000
Administration	4,000	4,000	4,000
Total	\$83,000	\$77,800	\$79,036

NOTES

The Department of Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour will be asked for \$22,320 annually in wages through the Work Ability program to cover three weeks of work placements. The amount will increase as the minimum wage increases. For an individual receiving income assistance arrangements would be made so the allowance does not impact their assistance.

On page 11 of the document under Resources, we described the contribution of a position to conduct workplace diagnostic audits with employers that enhance the success of this initiative and broaden the base of employers.

The cost per student in the first year is \$3,458.00

11. IMPLEMENTATION AND TIMELINES FOR THREE YEAR INITIATIVE

Activity 2008	Activity 2009 and 2010	Responsibility	Outcomes
Establish team of local leaders to inform and champion the initiative	Continue to broaden community support and understanding of initiative	Vibrant Communities Saint John (VCSJ)	Community and business leadership and support
Meetings of Leadership Team	Role of Leadership Team defined for the long term.	VCSJ, Leadership Team	Collaborative learning and thinking underway. Framework finalized, implemented and monitored by Community.
Develop conceptual approach for model program	Continue to refine approach based on evaluations.	VCSJ, Leadership team and other partners	Community and business leadership support for conceptual model and its enhancement.
Promote model in the community	Continue to promote model and its experiences in the community	Leadership team, VCSJ and other partners	Initial opportunity identified with two to three employers. Growing interest from employers to become involved.
Develop and implement marketing strategy for potential learners	Ongoing promotion and recruitment. Emphasis on neighbourhood approach with employers and individuals.	Leadership team and other partners	Marketing strategy developed and implemented with community partners. First intake of 12 plus individuals recruited. Growing interest from individuals to become involved. Neighbourhood focus underway.
Develop evaluation framework and implement.	Ongoing learnings documented and shared with others. Changes made to initiative through ongoing monitoring	VCSJ, UNBSJ, Leadership team, funders and other partners	Evaluation framework in place. Learnings contribute to enhancement of initiative for individuals and employers.
Finalize action plan, secure funding, and hire staff (allowing time for startup) for implementation	January 09 for first intake and continuation of initiative	Leadership Team, VCSJ, Saint John Learning Exchange and other partners	Employers and individuals prepared to test & operationalize the model. Employers committed for each intake. Demonstration initiative is tracked and Leadership Team follows challenges and successes
Document and share learnings	Document and share learnings	Leadership Team, VCSJ, SJ Learning Exchange, others	Learnings shared within New Brunswick and elsewhere
Championing of approach	Decision (or not) to champion sustainability beyond initiative	Leadership Team, funders and others	If decision to continue, sustainable funding in place

APPENDIX A: MEMBERS OF LEADERSHIP TEAM (July 2008)

Annette Albert, Principal (Acting) New Brunswick Community College Saint John Campus

Mike Bacon, Executive Director, Contact NB

Donna Beaton, Regional Director (or Brian Marks) Department of Social Development

Melanie Bowie, Senior Policy Advisory, Department of Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour

Heather Chase, Executive Director, Workforce Expansion Initiative, Enterprise Saint John

Regena Farnsworth, Acting Dean, Faculty of Business, University of New Brunswick - Saint John, **Chair**

Christina Fowler, Executive Director, Saint John Learning Exchange

Paulette Hicks, General Manager, Delta Brunswick Hotel and Brunswick Square Complex

Danny Jardine, Regional Manager, Supported Employment, Education and Housing, Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation

Barbara Kierstead Shanks, Regional Director, Department of Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour

Brian Kierstead, Area Director, Bayshore Home Health

Mike Lee, Vice President Human Resources, Moosehead

Shirley Mitchell, Manager of Human Resources, Coast Tire & Auto Service Service

Kathy Oldfield, Director of Operations, Wyndham Worldwide Canada

Cathy Wright, Social Planner, Vibrant Communities Saint John (staff)

Melissa Young, Executive Director of Training and Apprenticeship, Carpenter's Training Center of New Brunswick

APPENDIX B: LIVING WAGE

Excerpts from executive summary of an unpublished study of the Human Development Council in 2007:

The living wages for Saint John as calculated by research conducted by the Human Development Council are as follows:

1. **\$11.04** per hour for a single person working 37.5 hours per week for 52 weeks a year.
2. **\$11.41** per hour for a single parent with one child working 37.5 hours per week for 52 weeks a year.

The research was prompted by the Human Development Council's ongoing work of developing solutions to meet our community's challenges, in part by increasing the number of people earning sustainable incomes.

The process of estimating these living wages involved:

- Establishing a meaningful measure of poverty.
- Determining the level of material well-being provided by the living wage.
- Choosing the size and composition of the households.
- Establishing expense categories and amounts for each category.
- Choosing the number of hours of employment per week, and weeks worked per year.
- Factoring in government deductions and taxes on earnings, and government transfers to households.

The living wage can then be defined as the hourly wage that allows a household to enjoy a decent but modest quality of life, a relatively extensive conception of social inclusion, and some basic sustainability. Thus the income from the living wage allows the family to:

- Obtain food, clothing and shelter.
- Maintain the health of family members.
- Participate as an active member in the community.
- Sustain some basic planning depth and accommodation for the unexpected.

This quality of life, social inclusion and sustainability is defined in terms of what, specifically, is in the basket.

This report presents a living wage for the following two household compositions:

- Model 1: Single unattached male aged 19-24, living alone.
- Model 2: Single mother aged 19-24 with a 4-year-old child.

These two household types were used as the reference families because multiple poverty indicators by Statistics Canada and HRDC consistently show that unattached individuals and female lone-parent families in New Brunswick experience poverty rates significantly above the national average for those demographics.

This study chose to estimate expenses by means of a Market Basket Measure, similar to that done by HRDC. This entails doing categories of household expenses and amounts for each expense.

APPENDIX C: SAINT JOHN LEARNING EXCHANGE

The Saint John Learning Exchange is located at 162 Union Street. Some of the programs and services offered by the Learning Exchange are as follows:

- **Saint John Essential Skills Program** – The Saint John Essential Skills Program focuses on training people in the nine essential skills needed for enhanced employability: *Reading Text, Document Use, Numeracy, Writing, Thinking Skills, Teamwork, Continuous Learning, Oral Communication, and Computer Use*. These are skills that apply to all occupations and enable people to carry out a wide variety of everyday life and work tasks. Essential skills training, along with prior learning assessment, career search assistance, work placements, and ongoing support once employment is secured, will provide individuals with the tools they need to succeed in Saint John’s labour market today.
- **Basic Education Skills Training (BEST)** – an employment preparation program that assists youth and adults with self-development skills, pre-employment skills, GED preparation and general upgrading.
- **Community Adult Learning Program (CALP)** – this program provides basic literacy and numeracy skills to learners of various levels. For many it involves upgrading preparation for writing GED tests and entering Community College programs.
- **Homework School** – children often need additional one-on-one help, or a quiet, calm and safe place to focus on their homework. They come to the Learning Exchange for assistance in Math, English, Social Studies, Science and Health. This program is aimed at children in grades 1 – 8 and is generously supported by Aliant.
- **Learnex** – individualized educational and training opportunities for adults in the workplace, offered on a fee-for-service basis.
- **Reading Rocks** - “Reading Rocks” is an interactive show featuring puppets, ventriloquism and magic for elementary and pre-school students. Our Reading Rocks Program helps foster a love for reading through entertainment, as well as encourages children to make time each day to spend with a favorite book. This program is generously supported by The Greater Saint John Community Foundation.