



# THE BUZZ ON LITERACY

Literacy Now, South Okanagan-Similkameen

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## Passing the Torch



May 1st marked an end and but also a new beginning for Literacy Now in the South Okanagan-Similkameen Region. Caroline has completed her productive and successful year as the Community Outreach Co-ordinator for the South Okanagan-Similkameen Region and has begun a new job as a Vice Principal in School District 53. Caroline accomplished a great deal in her role including co-ordinating our first Family Literacy Day event held at Cherry Lane Mall in Penticton and creating 3 sub-committees to work on specific areas of our Community Literacy Plan: Adult/Workplace Literacy, Health Literacy and Family Literacy. On behalf of the whole Literacy Now SO-S Task Group, I would like to thank Caroline for the great progress she made in our Community Literacy Plan and give our congratulations on her new job!

Lynn Hauptman, Director of Instruction for SD 67, also an invaluable member of our Literacy Now Executive Committee and Task Group, will be leaving us soon too to become the new Superintendent of Schools for Prince Rupert. We are sorry to see Lynn go and wish her the best of luck!

We have a new Literacy Now Co-ordinator, Naomi Ludington. Naomi has made Penticton her home for the past 10 years. She is a parent, educator, and administrator and has always had a keen interest in literacy issues. Naomi has been volunteering on the Literacy Now Family Literacy Sub-committee during the past year and is thrilled to be taking on the Co-ordinator role for the next phase of our Community Literacy Plan.



We celebrated a successful past year and the beginning of a new one during our Literacy Now Task Group meeting on April 30th.

### In This Issue

Passing the Torch - Celebrating a Successful 08/09 year	1
Penticton Writers and Publishers Youth Write Camp	1
'Coming to Keremeos' by Yuki Urquhart - English as a Second Language Program in Keremeos	2
Communities For Kids Spring Art Event	2
Great book idea for teens and young adults	2



## Penticton Writers and Publishers

### Youth Write Camp

July 5-10, 2009  
PENTICTON, BC

**This year will see young writers from all over the province converging for a week of literary fun and learning in the South Okanagan, as winners of the Young BC Writers contest celebrate their achievement.**

Renowned Writers and Publishers from all across Canada will be part of this magical week for these young writers.

Check out the Book Review  
on page 2...



## Coming to Keremeos by Yuki Urquhart

It was the end of the day when I sat down at the subway in Japan and looked at my new passport. I was thinking about other countries I would like to visit, when suddenly, I heard a foreign voice say "Can you speak English?" At first I was surprised. It wasn't often that I spoke to strangers. "I don't speak English," I started to say. Then I thought, "Maybe it would be interesting to talk with this foreigner."

He was persistent and kept talking with me about languages. He was surprised when I started to speak English, and after that we were able to talk more comfortably with each other. We later realized we were getting off at the same stop. We spoke for hours and I found out Cam was a carpenter from B.C. and that he was working in Japan with his cousin.

Before we parted ways we exchanged cell phone e-mail addresses so we could trade jokes and pictures. We did this for the next two weeks before we met again at the same subway station. After that we hung out all the time with groups of our friends at Karaoke or just together for a quiet dinner at a local fast food restaurant.

After Cam and I had been dating awhile, we talked about moving to Canada together. He wanted me to move to Keremeos, because his parents lived there, and he said the town was a very beautiful place. At that time I had a job in Japan at a clinic for children. I gave my notice in advance and the head Doctor wished me well. I sent a lot of my belongings to Cam using the post office to ship them. It was very expensive. Afterwards I got my ticket to go to Canada.

I met up with him and his family at Vancouver airport on Dec. 17th, 2007. We drove to Keremeos right away. It took about 6 hours, because of snowy weather conditions, but felt like forever. I still remember seeing the dark waters, buried in ice, of the Similkameen river as we drove the snowy highway. When I arrived at our new house, I saw huge mountains covered with snow all around. They were so beautiful, and I thought the one with the big "K" was pretty neat looking. This town called Keremeos didn't have tall buildings, apartments, taxi cabs, or subways and had telephone poles made from trees, which I wasn't used to seeing. Things were a big change for me here. In Japan, it seemed, everything was made from concrete. And public transportation was right outside my apartment door.

I tried learning new recipes all the time. I enjoyed cooking meals and was happy when Cam enjoyed them with me. I didn't have any friends around me any more though, and I felt like I needed to talk with somebody when Cam wasn't around, I wasn't sure my English was good enough for me to make friends. I went to some of Cam's friends houses, but I didn't know how I should act and talk. Language, culture and history are all very different in Canada, and my personality was kind of shy anyways.

I found a lot of different ads posted on the wall one day as I was in the clinic in Keremeos. I started looking through them and I found some information about free English classes. Soon I was starting to go out to study English. It was a lot of fun for me because I had a lot of questions about English, and I started to read English books too. It has improved my vocabulary tremendously, and Cam and I enjoy practising it together. My English is still not good enough to explain everything the way I do in Japanese, but now I can enjoy speaking English and making new friends. I still miss Japanese foods and also Japanese TV shows, though I can still watch a few on the Internet.

*Yuki is a member of the English as a Second Language Settlement Assistance Program in Keremeos. Thank you for contributing to our newsletter, Yuki!*

## Communities for Kids

Second Annual  
Spring Art Event and T-shirt Give Away  
"What I love about my community!"

All children 2 to 6 years old in the South Okanagan-Similkameen are invited to enter a painting or drawing for a chance to win a colourful, comfy [Communities for Kids](#) T-shirt.

Draw or paint a picture of what you like best about your community, and bring it to your Okanagan Regional Library Branch or Penticton Public Library. On the back of your picture please write:

- [Communities for Kids](#) Second Annual Spring Art Event
- Your name, age, phone number
- Your community

**[Entry deadline: June 5, 2009](#)**

Draw winners from every community will be invited to a T-shirt presentation event in their community. A story and picture of event winners from each community will be posted on the [Communities for Kids](#) website, and submitted to local newspapers.

**[Check out our website at www.communitiesforkids.ca](#)**

## Another Great Read!

### The Book Thief

by Markus Zusak

The Extraordinary New York Times #1 Bestseller

The Book Thief is set in Germany beginning in 1939, and focuses on an abandoned German girl, Liesel, who is sent to foster parents in another area, a small town near Munich. As Liesel learns to cope with her new environment, all the gains she has endured, and the extreme unhappiness of pre-war and wartime Germany, she yearns to escape via reading. Her foster father, Hans helps her learn to read, and Liesel finds books here and there - in a snowy graveyard, in a Nazi book-burning, and inside the local mayor's house. She has a few friends, including first her neighbour and classmate Rudy, and later on her foster father's best WWI friend's son, Max, a Jew whom her new family must hide in their basement. While the toll of WWII, Allied bombing, and Nazi brutality increases, Liesel's world starts to crumble, but words and reading somehow sustain her.

As of April 2009, The Book Thief has been on the New York Times Children's Best Seller list and is has been marketed as a young-adult novel.

**"BRILLIANT and hugely ambitious...  
It's the kind of book that can be  
LIFE-CHANGING."**