

Media Release: Feb. 28, 2007: For Immediate Release: Arts News: **British Columbians Reading Together: The Family Stories Project**

Media Contacts: Jennifer Hinnell, The Word on the Street: 604.684.8266, jennifer@rebuscreative.com and Jean Rasmussen, Literacy BC: 604.684.0624, jrasmussen@literacybc.ca



BRITISH COLUMBIANS READING TOGETHER: THE FAMILY STORIES PROJECT LAUNCHES TODAY

(Vancouver): Literacy BC has once again teamed up with The Word on the Street to produce **The Family Stories Project**, to distribute journals and other materials—which learners will use to record and share their family stories—to selected learning centres throughout the province.

The Family Stories Project will reach an estimated 500 adult learners and their families, who will collect stories, anecdotes, poems, newspaper clippings, photographs and other material over the next few months. Adults who are working to upgrade their literacy skills will use the journals as launch pads to explore literacy with their families. Twenty groups comprised of diverse learners (e.g. recent immigrants, ESL learners, young mothers, First Nations elders, etc.) at learning centres around BC are participating. The journals will compose a rich repository of experiences, to be celebrated at The Word on the Street Festival in September 2007.

In past years, the Family Stories Project has proven remarkably successful at “drawing learners out of their shells.” The project is an example of the innovative approaches that are helping family literacy programs become increasingly recognized as effective models for addressing our province's literacy challenge.

Family literacy programs have long recognized the value of using journals to foster learning. Students can take risks with thinking and writing, build connections with what they know and what they have learned, process their experiences, and keep track of their progress. The Family Stories Project combines the value of journal-keeping with the power of family literacy, which promotes intergenerational sharing of experiences and learning, enhances the development of language and numeracy skills, and integrates learning support for families.

Over the next few months, Literacy BC and The Word on the Street will work together to capture the family stories from participating centres in a newly created section on Literacy BC's website www.literacy.bc.ca (check this out frequently for updates!).

The Word on the Street and Literacy BC gratefully acknowledge the support of the following: BC Gaming Commission, The Hamber Foundation, the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation, the National Literacy Secretariat, the Raise-a-Reader Foundation and the Rosedale on Robson Suite Hotel.

-30-

Media Contacts: Jennifer Hinnell, The Word on the Street: 604.684.8266 (ext. 24), jennifer@rebuscreative.com;
Jean Rasmussen, Literacy BC: 604.684.0624, jrasmussen@literacybc.ca