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PLA Conference XXV

"Celebrating 25 Years of Building Relationships"

May 27-30, 2014

January 2014

Dear Colleague:

The conference planning committee has been busy preparing for the 25th Annual PLA Conference to be held at the Travelodge Hotel, Belleville, ON, Tuesday, May 27 - Friday, May 30, 2014.

The conference theme highlights the critical role of relationships in implementing needed changes to services for adult learners with PLAR as one of the key drivers. Effective change is a team sport involving the creation of solid relationships built over time based on trust, mutual confidence, respect, collaboration and a common cause.

The planning committee has chosen the wolf as the logo for this year's conference. Symbolically, the wolf is intended to pay homage to the significant influence that Indigenous peoples have had on this conference and the PLAR movement in Canada and internationally. It serves to remind us to keep our spirit alive, trust our instincts and to find ways that will best suit our needs and circumstances. In the realm of spirit animals the wolf brings forth instinct, perseverance, strength, intelligence, appetite for freedom and the importance of relationships.

For the past 25 years, the "glue" holding this conference together has been the unwavering commitment by many individuals, groups and organizations to make the universe of education more respectful for adult learners. The focus has been on eliminating barriers and opening up opportunities for adult learners to become what they want or need to be in both mainstream and Indigenous settings.

Implementing needed change is almost always about building and strengthening relationships and creating a climate in which change is positively embraced. This conference affords us the opportunity to reflect on challenges and issues that have emerged over a quarter of a century and to identify ways in which to strengthen the implementation of adult learner friendly approaches to education.

One of the conference highlights will be a plenary session in which key themes and trends emerging from this 25 year journey will be shared with conference participants. The session will be facilitated by Paul Zakos.

A second plenary session will focus on the newly created International Indigenous Recognition of Prior Learning Collective which became a concrete entity five years ago at this conference. A panel presentation will be chaired by Karihwakeron Tim Thompson, a founding member. Panelists include: Banakonda Kennedy Kish (FNTI) Sharon Hobenshield (Vancouver Island University) and Maria Hueichaqueo (Tain Adkimm, Chile). They will share their views on the importance of the Collective, the work done by the Collective to date and strategic plans for the future.

Kessie Moodley, Director of Workers College in Durban, South Africa, will share with us his experiences in implementing the Recognition of Prior Learning at Workers College and the ways in which it opens up so many possibilities for workers to recognize their own worth, value and contributions to a fair and equitable society.

Four pre-conference sessions will be offered this year:

- Introduction to PLAR and Portfolio Development
- PLAR Practitioner (Advisor and Assessor) Training
- Roots to Success - Portfolio Facilitator Training for Work with Youth
- International Indigenous RPL Collective-Developing Benchmarks for Quality Assurance

These sessions begin at 1:15 p.m. on Tuesday, May 27 and conclude at 11:45 a.m. on Wednesday, May 28.

A "Call for Presentations" form is attached. It will be appreciated if those wishing to make a presentation would return the completed form by Monday, March 17, 2014. For those wishing to display resource material, a resource room will be available. To make arrangements to display and share resources, please contact Lynn Wilson, Conference Co-ordinator at lwilson@loyalistic.on.ca or (613) 969-1913 ext. 2291.

Attached you will find information on conference sponsorship opportunities. We hope that either you or your organization will give serious consideration to assisting us with conference costs.

As always we look forward to having you join us as we continue to build a shared vision for PLAR and adult friendly approaches to learning.

Yours truly,



Paul Zakos, Chair
25th Annual Conference Planning Committee