

News Release

Government of Canada invests in innovative family literacy program

Toronto, September 10, 2009 – An in-home program that helps parents prepare their children for school and connect with services in their communities is expanding its family literacy program in several Canadian cities with the help of two federal departments.

Known as HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-School Youngsters), the program celebrated its 10-year anniversary in Canada today with nearly \$3.5 million in funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

HIPPY Canada helps immigrant families better understand Canadian language, life and culture in the comfort of their own home. It also helps them develop friendships and a sense of connectedness, and learn to access services in the community. This federal funding expands services at HIPPY's operations in the Toronto region and at three new sites in Halifax, Red Deer and Ottawa, creating family literacy opportunities for an additional 600 newcomer families. It also introduces a new curriculum that dramatically increases Canadian content in the HIPPY program.

“For the past 10 years, HIPPY has been helping families overcome isolation and participate in society,” said the Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism. “With these additional investments, HIPPY will be able to expand its reach to more Canadian cities to help newcomer families improve their language and literacy skills, maximizing their contribution to our society.”

“With today's announcement, more families will benefit from HIPPY's program,” said the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development. “I am particularly pleased that we are supporting the completion of a new curriculum that dramatically increases Canadian content in HIPPY's learning materials.”

HIPPY promotes parents as a child's first educator. Through culturally sensitive program delivery in the family home, HIPPY has established a record of reducing social isolation and fostering active participation by parents in Canadian society. Since it was established in 1999, HIPPY Canada has delivered family literacy services to more than 2,500 people. It currently serves over 600 immigrant and First Nation families per year at eight Canadian locations, including those in British Columbia and Quebec.

“I can't think of a better way to celebrate 10 years in Canada than knowing our best days are ahead,” said Dr. Miriam Westheimer, HIPPY's International Director. “With the support of the federal government, we can build on our foundation of success with three more sites and a dramatic expansion of Canadian content in our curriculum. I want to congratulate Debbie Bell and the entire HIPPY Canada team for their inspiring commitment to family literacy.”

Of the \$3,487,326 in funding, \$3,150,544 comes from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and \$336,782 comes from Human Resources and Skills Development.

HIPPY Canada is a branch of HIPPY International, which has community literacy programs operating in more than 10 countries worldwide – including more than 172 in the United States.

For further information (media only), please contact:

Alykhan Velshi
Office of Minister Kenney
Alykhan.Velshi@cic.gc.ca

Michelle Bakos
Press Secretary
Office of Minister Finley
819-994-2482

HIPPY Canada
Debbie Bell
Executive Director
dbell@hippycanada.ca
604-676-8251

Media Relations
Communications Branch
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
613-952-1650

Media Relations
Communications Branch
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
613-952-1650

Media Relations
Human Resources and Skills Development
819-994-5559

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