

Language Program

Written by Rhoda Keck (Language Director)

June marks the end of a challenging, yet rewarding, 12 months of language classes! We would like to congratulate our staff and students who showed great flexibility and resiliency in their language learning efforts this year. To the teachers we say thank you for your dedication and creativity in ensuring that the language needs of your students were being met.

Here are some statistical highlights from the Language Program this year (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022):

o 605 total registrations in English classes

- LINC: 390
- English for Work (at Regional Connections): 74
- English at Work (in the workplace): 49
- Literacy: 92

o Clients attended classes in:

- Winkler: 335
- Morden: 93
- Altona: 75
- Dauphin/Carman/Notre Dame: 54
- Provincial Online Clients: 48

182 CLB class placement tests for new clients



Program Highlights:

- Online Lead Teacher: Due to the increased number of blended and on-line classes being offered, we are pleased to announce that Rebecca Toews has completed her Lead Teacher training, and has been hired as our Online Lead Teacher. Rebecca works with new students to on-board them successfully to on-line platforms, and supports teachers teaching blended and on-line classes.
- Notre Dame de Lourdes: This past year we were able to provide Workplace Language Training for many of our clients in the Notre Dame de Lourdes area. Regional Connections provided both English at Work and French at Work classes to locally employed newcomers to the area.



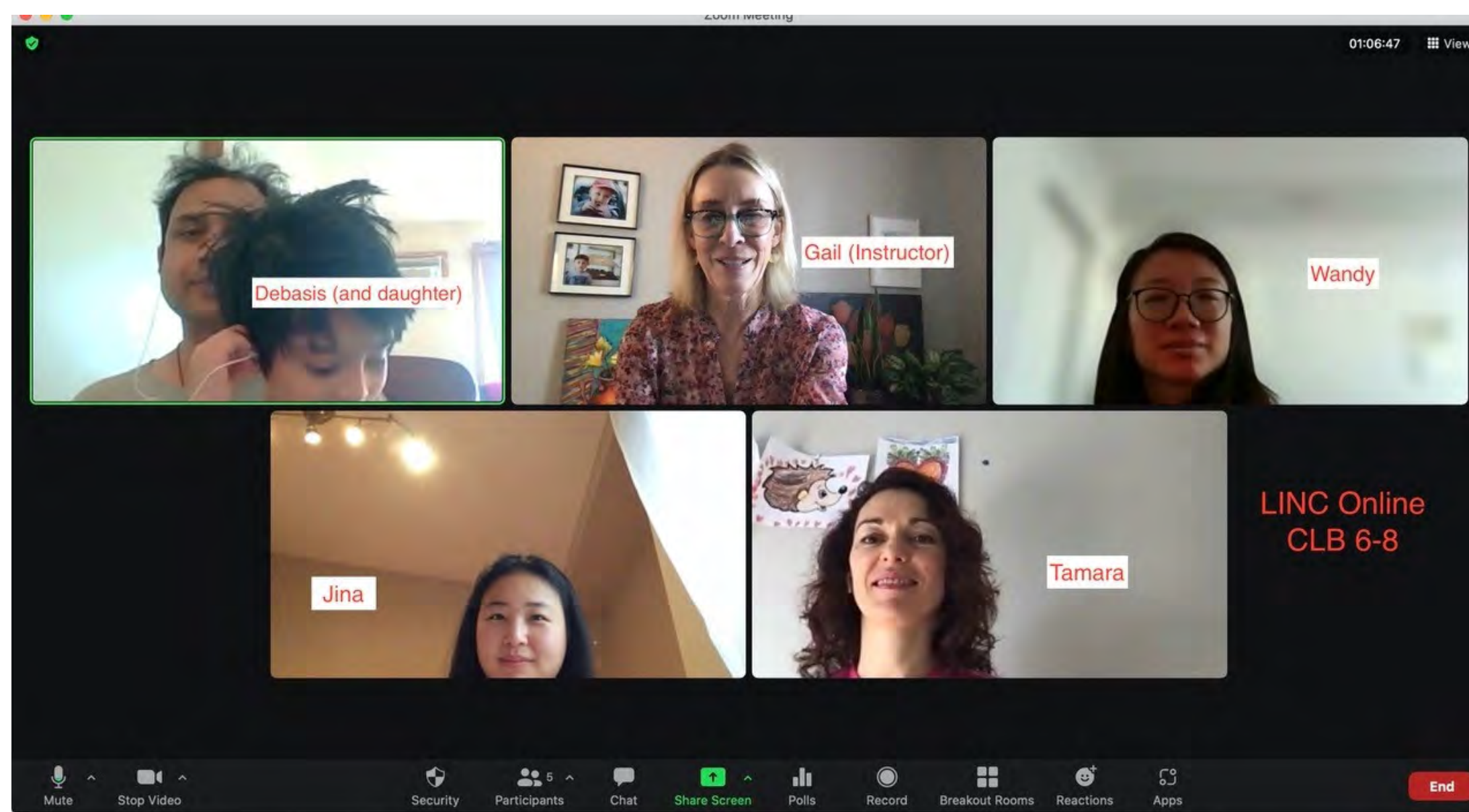
Success Stories

Ekaterina Beliaeva- "I came to Canada 4 years ago and my English was not very good. I would like to say a huge thank you to every person who works at Regional Connections for helping me and my family. Immigration is a very interesting and sometimes stressful experience, so it was so nice to know that you have people who really want and can help. Thank you for all the knowledge about this country and for the English classes. It was really useful and helped me to pass with success the citizenship test."

Sahra Salim is a highly driven and independent learner who has made phenomenal progress over the past school year. Sahra began the literacy program at Regional Connections as a Stage 2 student in 2019 and advanced to Stage 3 this past January. Recently, she has also started a number of courses at Altona's Regional Alternative Education Centre (RAEC), with the goal of getting her Manitoba Mature Student High School Diploma and Health Care Aide Certificate, in the future.

,Born in Somalia and later growing up in Saudi Arabia, getting an education is something that sShara Child," Sahra describes how it is impossible for girls from immigrant families to go to Sahra has had to fight for her entire life. In a reflective piece entitled "The Effect of Not Having an Education as a Child," Sahra describes how it is impossible for girls from immigrant families to go to school in Saudi Arabia. She writes, "I don't know how it feels to be educated as a child. I didn't have a dream. I didn't know what I wanted to be in the future."

When Sahra moved to Altona in 2018, she was once again determined to continue fighting for her education and immediately signed up for courses at both Regional Connections and RAEC. Throughout her learning journey from Stage 2, to Stage 3, to courses at RAEC, Sahra has found the courage to share her story and has thrived as a result!



CNC Program

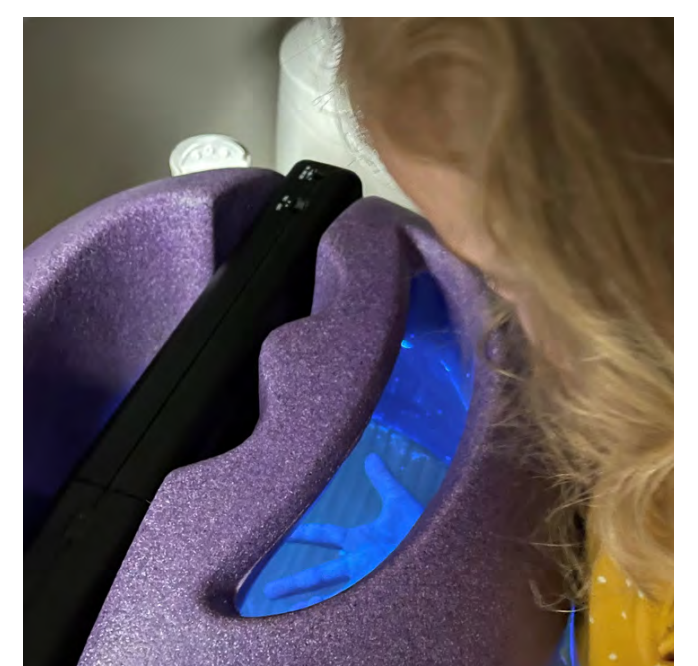
Written by Natalie MacFarlane (CNC Coordinator)

The Childcare Program allows clients with children to take daytime ESL and Literacy classes by offering free, on-site childcare for students. Currently we have three childcare programs, located in Winkler, Morden and Altona onsite at Regional Connections. As newcomers to Canada, many children have little or no English and can be unfamiliar with the Canadian way of life. Our caring staff provide a warm and welcoming environment for the children and parents alike. We focus on the child's development and facilitate activities and experiences that will interest and challenge the children's development in a positive way. We often tell parents that while they are in classes learning English and about living in Canada, their children are learning too! We help to prepare children for what Kindergarten will be like in later years, and children quickly adapt to a classroom routine. We love to see children get comfortable in our program, and quickly start building relationships with the staff and other children that attend. We set time aside to communicate with parents to ensure a smooth transition into childcare as well as an ongoing positive experience for both the child and parent. Often times when class is finished for the day, children are not ready to leave and request to stay longer! Some of our highlights from this year were:

I love to read month (February). We had a special guest each day that came to read a book to the children. We even had some puppies come to visit!

-We talked about farm animals, and hatched baby chicks as an experiment in the classroom! The children looked forward to coming and seeing if the eggs had hatched every day!

-We had some local community helpers come and talk to the children about the work that they do during our community helper's week! We had public health come and talk to the children about hand hygiene and showed them the germs on their hands with a black light experience. We also had the local fire chief come and talk about fire safety, and see some of his equipment that he wears to keep him safe in a fire!



Success Story

(shared with permission)

"My name is Geradine Kakfa Tchokoko. I am from Cameroon in Central Africa. I have been in the Pembina Valley for 3 years and 8 months. I have two daughters, the oldest will turn 3 years old in two weeks and the youngest is 14 months. The things that I loved most about the childcare program at Regional Connections is the free childcare for when the parents take English classes and the special care that the staff provides to the children that go there. I really appreciate how the staff work with the children."

Stats: Total Registrations: 50 children



HIPPY Program

Written by Iris Tsui (HIPPY Program Coordinator)

'Parents', 'Children', 'Home Visitors'; Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is designed to bring positive outcomes to these three groups of people we serve. After the completion of the program, parents are empowered to view themselves as the first and most important educator in their children's lives. Home Visitors meet with mothers to help teach them the curriculum they then can practice with their child throughout the week. The cognitive development of the children is also stimulated through routine role play activities. Building routine in the home is the first step into helping children succeed in school. While this is happening, Home Visitors also take part in an extensive Professional Development program delivered through Mothers Matter Centre (Home of HIPPY Canada).

HIPPY can be delivered in person, or online. Being able to deliver HIPPY virtually allows for families who live in remote areas to join HIPPY. Just this past year, we extended HIPPY into Altona; which has been a positive experience for newcomers living in that community.

HIPPY Home Visit

Our Home Visitors conduct weekly home visits to the HIPPY families. They deliver a weekly learning package to the families; and practice role play with the mother. In this way, the parents know how to interact with their childre in a fun, and educational way. We are happy to see the mutual trust that's built between the mother and the home visitor.

HIPPY Group Meeting

Group meetings are a valuable time for families to come together and socialize with one another. This year we hosted a few group activities such as Library Tour, Nobody's Perfect Parenting, and our Holiday Party. These group meetings help build the importance of integrating into their community, meeting new friends, and learning important parenting skills.

Program Highlights:

Number of families served: 27

Locations: Winkler, Morden, Altona

Number of Home Visitors: 3



SWIS Program

Written by Allan Jones (SWIS Coordinator)

The Settlement Workers In Schools (SWIS) program works in collaboration with the following school divisions: Border Land, Garden Valley, Mountain View and Western. Throughout the region, there are 8 SWIS workers and one SWIS Co-ordinator.

The goal of the SWIS Program is to support the enrollment and orientation of newcomer students so that they can fully participate and succeed in school life. We also support the parents, families, and school staff to ensure there is good communication, engagement, and participation between the home and schools so that newcomer children and youth have the best possible school and community experience.

A few highlights of the past year:

Altona

- Youth Mentor program
- 4 week online-I love to Read Month with stories and crafts
- Information Sessions- Dressing for Winter
Healthy Snacks
Report Cards
School lunch conversation
- Learn to Skate
- Chess Club
- Book Club
- Crafts

Dauphin

- Developing greater awareness of the SWIS program within Mountain View School division and building relationships with school staff. (Dauphin)
- Brining together family, school staff, and interpreter to provide information and to help student make plans for post-secondary education

Winkler

- We have made many more community connections and they have helped with some of our events, such as "I love to read month." As well, as gift cards and discount rates for our summer programming.
- Giving back to the community, SWIS kids at Christmas time made and decorated 400 cookies for one of the elderly homes in the community and we sang Christmas carols with the kids, they loved giving back and even got interviewed for the local news.



- Being able to do things in person with the kids and families now that the Covid restrictions have eased, we have enjoyed activities such as a scavenger hunt at the local greenhouse.
- Seeing an increase in SWIS participants.
- Getting a grant for 50 kids to receive free swimming lessons, this filled up so fast and we have more on the wait list.

A few upcoming challenges:

Altona

- Supporting more refugee families with higher needs-whether language, culture, etc.
- Restructuring our programming now that Covid restrictions have lifted.
- Accommodating increasingly diverse needs of students from many different countries and cultures.

Dauphin

- Delivering afterschool/noon programming to students spread through the seven schools in Dauphin

Winkler

- Transportation continues to be an issue for families and for SWIS workers to get children to and from certain events, or for families trying to make it in for an appointment.
- Funding has been an issue, as we have to limit the amount of kids and activities we do.
- Trying to build relationships within the schools as the restrictions have eased.
- Finding a recreational space to hold sporting events, cooking events can be a challenge.
- Only having one phone between mom and dad has had issues for numerous reasons.

