

# ADULT LITERACY REFLECTIONS

## A SERIES BY AYBUKE YAMAN - PART ONE

As a third-year student in City Studies, I have already volunteered at a fair amount of non-profit organizations with different aims and targets, all of which I was deeply passionate about my whole life. In comparison, adult literacy is frankly something that I have not always been aware about. When it comes to the reality of marginalized communities and intergenerational poverty, there are some trends and correspondences that stand out right away. These are aspects we usually focus on such as race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, immigrating or being born into Canada and so on. These are surely aspects that hold much weight in the patterns of marginalization.

I choose to have my placement at the KGO Adult Literacy Program (KGO ALP) due to my second program of English and my past experience with tutoring. I knew as an immigrant and child of immigrants that I enjoyed sharing my knowledge of English with others looking to learn. As I got to know why the KGO ALP functions and how it functions, I became more and more invested in being a part of a group coming together to better ourselves. Adult literacy is more than learning about the technical language of English: it is critical thinking, reading comprehension, effective writing, faster processing and strong articulation.

There are a lot of reasons for a gap in literacy including: the quality of education offered in marginalized communities, the speed/method of education not fitting the individual's learning needs, the quality of and access to efficient ESL programs for adult immigrants, the higher dropout rates in certain demographics, the need for impoverished youths to focus on bringing their family an income or taking care of their family before their education and so on. There are many circumstances that lead to a barrier of literacy as an adult and this plays a large role in quality of life. Unless we are literally in a person's shoes, we truly can not be in any place of judgement. All we do know is that life circumstances and the education system have been letting down a large group of people and there need to be resources like the KGO ALP to make up for it.

Whether it be easily getting around in the city, accessing resources, reading the daily news or filling government forms, literacy is required for almost all of the small parts in daily life. High-literacy and efficient numeracy is also incredibly valuable for employment opportunities and promotions. In essence, adult literacy programs are crucial in being that stepping stone and I chose to work with the KGO ALP because I knew how special it would be to learn together in how these skills can improve our quality of life.

