



## Words In Action! Girl Guides Focuses on Improving Literacy in Canada

Toronto, Ontario – **Literacy affects every aspect of our daily lives and is something that is often taken for granted.** Individuals who have low literacy may experience barriers to education, employment, community and civic engagement, and more. Recognizing the importance of this, Girl Guides of Canada–Guides du Canada is focusing its fourth annual National Service Project (NSP) on literacy. **“Words in Action” will promote the importance of literacy, increase access to literacy materials and services, and help Canadians interpret information in a meaningful way.** Inspired by the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goal to *Achieve Universal Primary Education, specifically through literacy*, Girl Guides will be making a difference throughout 2015 and 2016 by helping Canadians of all ages improve their reading, writing and comprehension skills.

- Four in 10 Canadian 15 year-olds have insufficient reading skills. Poor youth literacy is related to high school drop-out rates and long-term unemployment.
- 42 per cent of Canadians aged 16 to 65 have lower literacy than is needed to cope with the increasing information demands of our society. This means that about two in every five Canadian adults – 9 million people – can’t read well enough to do simple everyday tasks.
- Low literacy is more common in certain groups, which may include seniors, immigrants and Aboriginal Canadians.

*Literacy Matters: A call for Action – TD Bank Financial Group & Literacy and Policing in Canada: Target Crime with Literacy*

Words in Action will give Canadians the tools to get on track with literacy. Together, girls from Sparks to Rangers (ages 5-17) will have the opportunity to **complete one or more of the following five service activities to make literacy more accessible:**



### Book Drives

By collecting gently-used books and donating them to an organization in need, Girl Guide units will provide community members with the opportunity to read books where little or no access previously existed – especially those in under-funded schools, shelters, and rural communities.

### Book Exchanges

Girls will plan a book exchange where each Girl Guide will bring two books, one to exchange with another girl in their unit and another that can be donated to a local charity. Whatever the destination, these books will be repurposed and given a new home.



Girl Guides  
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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Literacy Backpacks

Literacy goes beyond reading books. It also includes the ability to understand information, such as graphs, finances and how to use computers. To facilitate this, Girl Guides will be donating literacy backpacks filled with school supplies to give others the tools to succeed in school and in life.

### Volunteering to Read

Within their community Girl Guides will find opportunities to read to children, adults and the elderly, at community centres, libraries or local organizations that could benefit from the program. This will help improve access to literacy, but also help girls build their confidence and public speaking skills.

### Reading Tents

Girls from different Girl Guide branches will repurpose their camping tents to create safe environments where their sisters in Guiding can enjoy reading. While older girls will benefit from practicing their leadership skills, younger girls will learn new words and practice their reading skills.

To learn more about Words in Action and the projects girls are involved in, visit [girlguides.ca](http://girlguides.ca) and check out the [NSP page](#).

*Girl Guides of Canada gratefully acknowledges the support of Frontier College in the development of content and activities for Words in Action.*

### About Girl Guides of Canada–Guides du Canada:

Guiding provides a safe environment that invites girls and young women to challenge themselves, to find their voice, meet new friends, have fun and make a difference in the world. Girl Guides of Canada–Guides du Canada (GGC) strives to ensure that girls and women from all walks of life, identities and lived experiences feel a sense of belonging and can fully participate. Girl Guides is an organization with more than 100 years of history and a strong and growing future. Join Us.

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