

Health and Literacy

The Mini-Med School and the Literacy Foundation Working Together to Reach Native Children

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slide 1- verbatim text: Good morning, I am glad to be here today to present the collaboration between the Québec Literacy Foundation, the Mini-école de la santé, the Health Library, and aboriginal schools. My co-authors are Sophie Chiasson, from our acquisition department, Dr Éric Drouin, First Nations Program Advisor for the Faculty of Medicine, Bianca Seminaro, a recent graduate from the Library and Information Science School and Maryse Fagnant, a medical student. Nicole Lavallée, from the Literary Foundation, has been our advisor for content in this presentation related to the Foundation.

For convenience, I will use the English term Mini-Med School instead of Mini-école de la santé, and I will say UdeM instead of Université de Montréal (University of Montreal).



slide 2- verbatim text: *The Mini-Med School is a UdeM program where health sciences students visit Native communities' schools. The Health Library participates in those visits since 2014, funds and develops book collections with the school libraries and recruits LIS students for the Mini-Med School book booth.*

You might already be aware of the library work with the Mini-Med school, as it was the inspiration for the Mosaic 2016 community service program: "[Promoting Health Professions for First Nations Kids](#)." If you haven't yet seen info about this activity, it is still time to participate...and follow the link to my presentation from last year CHLA conference.

We are still working with the school libraries and are now upgrading the collections and getting feedback from the schools. The main highlight of the info we gathered from the schools, is a request to put more emphasis on health vs health sciences and have more children books on major health issues in aboriginal communities - -diabetes, for example.

The UdeM library is following the same path the Mini-Med school took over the years. The first objective of the Mini-Med School when it started was to « introduce aboriginal children to the health professions ». However, what is the use of it, if a staggering number of kids don't complete high school? Through the years, emphasis on motivating the kids to stay in school and encouraging them to have healthy living practices have taken more space in the Mini-Med School activities.

A new partnership



To prevent reading and writing difficulties
and have an impact on student retention

To give children access to books at home
through the Foundation's *The Gift of
Reading* program

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slide 3- verbatim text: As reading skills play a major role in student retention, we thought that it was important not only for the kids to have access to books through the library but also at home. This is where the Foundation plays a major role, through its program The Gift of Reading, the Foundation give books to underprivileged children. We were lucky that Sophie was already involved with this program, and the collaboration was easy to establish.

Starting this spring, The Gift of Reading program will give brand new books (stories, novels, comic books, board books) to more than 2 hundred children in two native schools where the Mini-Med School is involve. This is 17% of the total books given this year by the Foundation to Native kids. We hope to add next spring the 3 other Native communities who are working with the Mini-Med School. My role in adding new communities, was to meet people, make them aware of the program - how easy it is to participate- and work with them in finding a way to have the books delivered to their community, as they are located outside of the delivery range of the Foundation. The collaboration with the Foundation is also growing in another direction as all the libraries at Université de Montréal will become this fall a book collection site for The Gift of Reading program. Books given by the program come from public donations. The UdeM community will be invited to participate in the book drive for The Gift of Reading program and posters, gift kits and collection boxes will be available in all the UdeM libraries. Also discussions will be initiated with the Foundation to have the book drive at UdeM done specifically for Native kids.