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THE EXAMINER/MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2009

## CITY/REGION



Clifford Skarstedt, Examiner

Parenting author Ann Douglas gestures as she addresses visitors attending the ninth annual Frontier College Literacy Conference at Trent University's Gzowski College Saturday. Visit [www.peterboroughexaminer.com](http://www.peterboroughexaminer.com) to see more photos.

# Love of literacy

## Literacy conference held at Trent

### Online Video

[www.peterboroughexaminer.com](http://www.peterboroughexaminer.com)

By **ANDREA HOUSTON**

Examiner Education Writer

After struggling with literacy his entire life, Peterborough chaplain Dan Haley finally triumphed over his obstacle the day he walked through the doors of the Trent Valley Literacy Association, he said.

Haley is chaplain at the Peterborough Community Chaplaincy, which supports people making the transition from prison to the community. He was one of the speakers at Frontier College's ninth annual Literacy Conference at Trent on Saturday.

Undiagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) until he was in his late-30s, Haley said he lived a "double life" until he turned his life around when he learned to read and write.

"I started reading kids books and had a tutor," he told the roomful of about 15 people. "Reading and writing is still difficult for me today, especially some of those court documents and psychology reports," he joked.

Haley's inspiring life story and battle with literacy is the subject of an autobiography, *A Brutal Way of Earning*, co-authored with journalist Jane Davidson.

The books were available at Haley's discussion on Saturday.

"Dan had to learn how to read as an adult and the many challenges he had to overcome to become literate," said Christine Jaros, community coordinator for the conference.

"So he's discussing different aspects of what it's like to be an adult

learner."

Simple everyday acts like learning how to cook, reading prescription medication, reading household cleaning products or using public transit all require a basic level of literacy, Jaros said.

Jaros said about 40 per cent of Canadians have difficulty with everyday reading.

"Which is shocking. That's millions and millions of Canadians that are having problems with everyday tasks," Jaros said. "These people have problems getting a bank account, going to the doctor, reading a bus schedule, getting a job.

"All the things we take for granted are really challenging for people lacking literacy skills."

The conference covered a wide range of topics, such as discussions on how to apply to teacher's college, the importance of early literacy, nutrition and feeding your brain, and learning disabilities, Jaros said.

About 160 people registered to take part in the conference, many of which were students, teachers, nurses and future educators, Jaros said.

Peterborough author Ann Douglas, an award-winning author and online columnist for a major Toronto newspaper, was the main guest speaker.

She is the creator of the internationally bestselling *The Mother of All Books* series.

**NOTES:** Through a network of thousands of volunteers, Frontier College has taught millions of Canadians to read and write since 1899.

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Page 30, Peterborough This Week, Friday, January 23, 2009

## The 'mother of all' guest speakers booked for literacy conference

The creator of 'The Mother of All' book series, Ann Douglas, will be speaking at Frontier College's ninth annual literacy conference on Jan. 24 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

There will also be workshops on how to apply to teacher's college, experiences from literacy boot camp, the importance of early literacy, and learning disabilities.

Local author Dan Haley will talk about learning to read as an adult.

[mykawartha.com](http://mykawartha.com)