



Rural Youth & Adult Literacy Trust

Literacy Tuition for Rural/Isolated Adults & Teenagers



First Newsletter for 2026

Tēnā koutou katoa and welcome to our first Rural Youth and Adult Literacy Trust newsletter for 2026.

We'd like to begin by sincerely thanking our funders, donors, and incredible volunteers. Your ongoing support makes our work possible. We are especially grateful for the passion, skills, and generosity of our volunteers, who give their time to support learners across Aotearoa.

As a charity providing free one-to-one reading and writing coaching for rural and isolated teenagers and adults, our flexible, remote approach allows us to reach learners anywhere in the country. Whether through Zoom, Google Meet, or phone, we're able to support people in rural communities with limited access to services, as well as those in main centres who need learning that fits around work, whānau, or training. This flexibility allows us to complement other literacy providers and help fill important gaps.

We've had a strong start to the year, and our team is excited about what lies ahead in 2026.

So far this year we have:

- Established 10 new collaborations and partnerships across the country
- Received 108 volunteer applications for our various roles
- Supported 20 new student leads

Supporting our space so we can support others

We are incredibly grateful to have received funding from the DV Bryant Trust to replace our broken heat pump at our office.

This may seem like a small upgrade, but it makes a big difference. A warm, comfortable space helps our staff and volunteers stay focused and supported as we work alongside our learners and every day.



Connecting with new communities in Christchurch

We had an incredible day at the Newcomers Expo in Christchurch on 14 February.

Nearly 200 people attended the event, and before it had even officially begun at 11am, people were already lining up at our stall to learn more about our free reading and writing support.

Throughout the day, we connected with a wide range of people, including teaching students, Master's students, international students, and high school students. Many were excited to hear about the work we do and expressed interest in becoming volunteers with RYALT.

As one of our team shared: "Nearly 200 newcomers attended. Before 11am, people were already queuing at our stall. We loved it!"

Events like this play an important role in helping us reach new communities, raise awareness of available support, and connect with people who want to make a difference.

A heartfelt thank you to the organisers: Volunteering Canterbury, Christchurch City Council, Welcoming Communities, and the Multicultural Recreation and Community Centre, for creating such a welcoming and well-run event.

We'd also like to acknowledge Mei, Saniia, and Mara for their passion and dedication on the day. You each did an outstanding job representing RYALT.



Connecting with Heartlands to support rural communities

We recently had the opportunity to deliver an online presentation to [Heartlands](#), sharing more about the work we do and how we support rural and isolated learners across Aotearoa.

[Heartlands](#) provides vital, accessible support to people in rural communities—connecting them with government services, information, and practical assistance closer to home. Their work helps remove barriers for those who may otherwise struggle to access the support they need.

There is a strong alignment between the work of Heartlands and our kaupapa. Like RYALT, they believe that where you live should not limit your access to essential services and opportunities.

This connection was made possible thanks to one of our dedicated Community Ambassadors, Sharyn Morcom (Whitianga), who introduced our services to the Whitianga Community Services Trust. It's a great example of how our ambassadors help open doors and strengthen connections within their local communities.

Through this presentation, we were able to raise awareness of our free one-to-one literacy coaching and explore how we can continue working alongside Heartlands to reach more people in rural communities who may benefit from additional support.

We're excited about the opportunity to strengthen this connection and continue collaborating to ensure that people in rural Aotearoa feel supported, connected, and empowered



Bringing our volunteers together

Over the past few months, we've had the pleasure of hosting end-of-year volunteer coffee meetups in both Christchurch and Hamilton, creating valuable opportunities for connection, celebration, and whakawhanaungatanga.

As a largely remote organisation, we know that volunteering can sometimes feel isolating. These meetups provide a chance for our volunteers to come together in person, share their experiences, and build relationships with others who are part of the RYALT community.

In Christchurch, we were grateful to Table at Monks Coffee & Eatery for generously sponsoring hot drinks and helping make the event extra special. Volunteers, including literacy coaches and our Christchurch Ambassador, enjoyed connecting and reflecting on the year together. A big thank you to our Event Manager, Sally Xie, for organising the event, and to Mei Chang for helping to host.



Christchurch Coffee Meetup Dec 2025

In Hamilton, we were equally fortunate to have Gather Foodhouse sponsor the meetup, creating a warm and welcoming space for volunteers to connect. It was wonderful to see a mix

of our literacy coaches, social media volunteer, researcher, and contact centre volunteer come together. Thank you to our Event Manager, Tomoko Catlin, for organising this event.



Hamilton Coffee Meetup Dec 2025

We're incredibly grateful to both Table at Monks Coffee & Eatery and Gather Foodhouse for their support, and to all our volunteers who continue to give their time, energy, and care to support our learners.

We're excited to be planning even more volunteer coffee meetups across the country this year, creating further opportunities for connection and support within our community.

If you or your organisation would be interested in sponsoring a future meetup or providing a venue, we would love to hear from you.

These moments of connection are an important part of building a strong, supported volunteer community and we look forward to many more throughout the year.

Student Writing 2026 – Finding My Voice

Ko tōku reo, ko tōku ohooho!

“Every word tells a story, and every story shows courage.” 🌿

We are thrilled to announce that this year’s **Student Writing Booklet** will celebrate the voices and stories of our learners under the theme: **Finding My Voice**.

Seeing their writing in print is an incredibly powerful experience for our learners—it validates their efforts, celebrates their progress, and builds confidence that is truly immeasurable. Being published gives learners a sense of pride, ownership, and motivation that lasts long beyond the page.

How you can help:

We’re calling on our amazing Literacy Coaches to encourage their learners to work on something for this year’s booklet. It could be a short story, poem, reflection, or any piece of writing that reflects their experiences, thoughts, or learning journey.

- **Deadline for submissions:** June 2026
- **Who can submit:** All learners currently working with RYALT Literacy Coaches
- **Format:** Handwritten or typed pieces are welcome—any style that expresses their voice

Let’s inspire our learners to take this opportunity to share their stories, build their confidence, and see their words celebrated in print. Every piece, big or small, contributes to a collection that honours courage, learning, and creativity.

A heartfelt thank you in advance to all our coaches for supporting and encouraging your learners to participate. Together, we can ensure that every learner’s voice is heard.

Be the reason someone keeps learning—sponsor, celebrate, or spread the word

At the Rural Youth and Adult Literacy Trust, we’re always looking for ways to celebrate our learners and continue providing high-quality support—and this is where our amazing community can help make a difference!

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1. Sponsor our monthly StepsWeb draw

We're looking for a sponsor to support our monthly student prize draw with a \$30 contribution. Your support helps motivate learners and rewards their hard work as they progress through their literacy journey. Your contribution helps keep learners engaged and inspired.

2. Help us celebrate student milestones

Learners achieve incredible things every day, and we want to celebrate those milestones—like:

- 25 hours of learning
- 50 hours of learning
- 100 hours of learning

If you or your organisation can offer vouchers, products, or experiences to help us recognise these achievements, we'd love to hear from you! Your support shows learners that their hard work is valued and celebrated.

Email admin@adulthoodliteracy.ac.nz if you are interested.

3. Spread the word

You can help even if you're not able to sponsor prizes:

- Follow us on [Facebook](#), LinkedIn and [Instagram](#)
- Share our posts to help more people discover the free literacy support available
- Donate a device for a learner who doesn't have access to one
<https://adulthoodliteracy.ac.nz/donate/>
- Tell your friends, family, and colleagues about our free reading and writing support

Did you know? The percentage of New Zealand adults with literacy levels below what's needed for everyday life has increased from 11.8% to 26% over the last ten years. Your support could change someone's life.