

Speaking Up

Here's a big word for you: "glossophobia". It means a fear of public speaking. I prefer my mother's way of describing it, though..."cat got your tongue?" No matter what you call it, though, almost all of us at some point in time have found ourselves wanting or needing to say something to a group of people, and being filled with anxiety at the thought of it.

The Training and Learning Centre of Renfrew County has partnered with the Pembroke and Area Toastmasters Club to offer a program called Speechcraft. Over eight evenings this fall, a group of folks interested in getting more comfortable speaking in public, have been gathering together with the support of a veteran Toastmaster, Phil Godon, to learn about how to improve their public speaking skills.

Now you might think this would only be of interest to people who have to speak to larger groups in formal settings. Nothing could be further from the truth. Whether you have to speak to a teacher or principal about your child's progress in school, talk to your employer about a work situation, address local Council, share your thoughts at a wedding or a funeral, or speak up in your Parish community, it's so much easier to do when you feel confident about your skills.

The Speechcraft Program helps you to begin right at the beginning. Working in a small group, participants practice short speeches about things that matter to them. They learn about how to organize a speech, how to make sure their points are understood, how to choose the best words, and use gestures and their voices to greatest effect. Perhaps most importantly, they boost their confidence, face their public speaking fears and get to know their strengths as public speakers.

Speechcraft helps people find their voice, and feel very good about sharing their stories, their opinions, their hopes and dreams. It's a safe and relaxing environment, and a big part of the program is learning how to listen well to what others are saying, to celebrate their accomplishments and to provide helpful feedback about things that could be improved.

This program ends on Thursday October 31 with participants giving their final speeches to family and friends. If you'd like to join us that evening, please contact Sue Rupert, TLC's Program Manager at 613-628-1720. If you think you'd like to give Speechcraft a try, (it costs \$20 for all eight 90 minute sessions and includes all kinds of helpful material) let Sue know and TLC and the Toastmasters Club will start planning for another program.