

Press Release

The Hague, 10th September 2008

Stichting Lezen & Schrijven continues and sets up new initiative

28 reputed Dutch men and women are the face of a new approach of low literacy.

H.R.H. Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands announced today that Stichting Lezen & Schrijven will continue its work in the next coming years. Princess Laurentien will continue to preside this foundation. The Princess also launched a new initiative. The AtoZ Forum. An independent and informal forum consisting of 28 persons who, all together, are committed to make the Netherlands literate. Frits van Oostrom is the chairman of this Forum. The Forum consists of appealing people from various professional branches who all play a leading role within their own branch.

Continuation Stichting Lezen & Schrijven

The coming years, Stichting Lezen & Schrijven wants to fathom and expand the approach of low literacy. Amongst others, the foundation is committed to help the signers of the Covenant Structural approach low literacy in society and the corporate world 2007 – 2015 with achieving their ambitions. This covenant, signed by the government (the ministries of Education, Culture and Science, Youth and Family and Social Affairs and Employment) and the corporate world, was drawn up a year ago on 11th September 2007.

Since its foundation in May 2004 Stichting Lezen & Schrijven has profiled itself as main driver to embed tackling low literacy in society. Margreet de Vries, director of Stichting Lezen & Schrijven: « More and more individuals and organisations are actively committed to and supportive of the importance of literacy. People become more familiar with the problem definition and the number of course attendants has almost doubled in four years times, also thanks to the efforts of all actors involved. Still, we haven't reached our goal. Embedding the notion that low literacy should be tackled in organisations and society has not been realised yet. »

The AtoZ Forum

To offer a face to the many social aspects of low literacy, the foundation sets up a new initiative : the AtoZ Forum.

The AtoZ Forum is a socially ample, independent platform, consisting of 28 people who all play a remarkable role within their own professional branch. Frits van Oostrom,

chairman of the AtoZ Forum « Before I became acquainted with Stichting Lezen & Schrijven, I knew low literacy as something that occurred in the Middle Ages. Now that I've heard more about low-literate people and have spoken to them, I realise that low literacy must be a very painful experience. We can't stand by and let this pass. »

Every year, the Forum publishes the AtoZ Diary. With this diary, they want to make a refreshing and constructive contribution to the approach of low literacy.

Members, who all collaborate on a personal title with the Forum, will also make an individual and personal commitment to fight low literacy.

The AtoZ Forum

Chairman:

Frits van Oostrom Author, scientist

Members:

Nurten Albayrak-Temur Directeur Centraal Orgaan Asielopvang (Director Central Body Asylum Refuge)

Peter Bakker Chairman of the Board TNT

Frans Bauer Singer

Hans de Boer Businessman, former chairman 'Taskforce Youth unemployment'

Daphne Deckers Author

Wendy van Dijk TV-hostess, actress

Adriaan van Dis Author

Huib van Doorne Chairman of the Board Lucas Bols

Rabbi Raphael Evers Dutch-Israelite Church community

Louise Fresco Professor UvA, writer, crowned member SER

Inez de Graaff Teacher Nt1 ROC Middle Netherlands

Pieter van den Hoogenband Swimmer

Yvon Jaspers TV-hostess

Tania Kross Opera singer

André Knottnerus	Chairman Health Council
Hendrik de Klubber	Literacy ambassador
Paul de Leeuw	Television producer, stand-up comedian, singer
Paul van Loon	Author children's books
Ed Nijpels	Manager, former politician
André Rieu	Violinist
Paul Rosenmöller	Television producer, former politician
Paul Scheffer	Author
Raymond Spanjard	Fellow founder and CEO Hyves
Naema Tahir	Author
Humberto Tan	Chairman Union Street Football the Netherlands, sports journalist
Jean-Marc van Tol	Cartoonist Fokke & Sukke, publisher, Dutch specialist
Paul Witteman	Journalist

Note for the editors

For more information and interview requests

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