

## Trainer Profile

### Kieran Ayton and Lisa Zawadzki

#### Cranston Library Activity Embodies Broadband RI Goals for Training



Kieran and Lisa at a BBRI Digital Literacy Forum.

Libraries are regarded as an ideal setting for bringing Broadband RI's digital literacy initiatives to life, and this goal has been achieved with outstanding results at the central location of the Cranston Public Library. Library staff members Kieran Ayton and Lisa Zawadzki have conducted three sets of basic Internet classes, with a waiting list already in place for future sessions.

The efforts of Ayton and Zawadzki reflect several of Broadband RI's objectives in bringing digital literacy training to local communities in need. The training occurs in a setting accessible to the targeted citizens; the classes are taught using a team teaching approach that BBRI encourages through its Train the Trainer workshops; and the trainers' efforts have been informed by opportunities through BBRI to network with other trainers.

For two hours at a time over four weekday morning sessions, Ayton and Zawadzki convert a large meeting room at the library into a mobile computer lab where residents learn the basics of searching the Internet and accessing e-mail.

"The classes attract a lot of seniors," says Zawadzki, a reference librarian in Cranston. "They feel kind of left behind; their kids have upgraded their own technology and have given them their old computer. Now they want to use the computer to stay in touch, and for general information."

The library's central location on Sockanosset Cross Road has become something of a technology hub for citizens both within and outside the city. Already the highest-volume library location by circulation desk activity in Rhode Island, the library houses not only the ongoing Internet classes but also a 24-desktop computer lab where staff conducts one-on-one assistance and visitors use the workstations for job search activity and other business.

*(Kieran Ayton and Lisa Zawadzki profile continued)*



Kieran and Lisa instructing a digital literacy training for the initial pilot at the Cranston Public Library.

Ayton, an information services and technology librarian, and Zawadzki have found that the digital literacy classes of about 10 students each are easiest to teach in a team format. The two staffers alternate the respective tasks, with one teaching the material while the other circulates through the room to troubleshoot any problems that arise.

“Before, when we would do training alone, we had to constantly stop what we were teaching when someone had an issue,” says Ayton.

The teaching team also will use the start of each class to review material from the previous classes; the instructors have found that repetition makes a difference for retention of the material. Zawadzki also makes liberal use of colorful handouts depicting the screens that users will typically view and offering important tips (such as, “If something you find on the Internet seems too good to be true, IT IS!!”).

The trainers say their work with residents has been both personally and professionally fulfilling. Ayton says that once the participants become comfortable with the technology, their appetite for learning more about the Internet grows.