



Canada's Premiers Announce Literacy Award Recipients for 2014

September 8, 2014 - On the occasion of International Literacy Day, Canada's Premiers announced today the recipients of the 10th annual Council of the Federation Literacy Award. The award celebrates outstanding achievement, innovative practice and excellence in literacy. It is presented to educators, volunteers, learners, community organizations, non-governmental organizations and businesses.

Recipients of the 2014 Council of the Federation Literacy Award are:

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association - Alberta
Anne Docherty - British Columbia
André Tourramitouyâï - Manitoba
Linda Anne Richards - Newfoundland and Labrador
St. Croix Public Library - New Brunswick
Kedgwick Public Library - New Brunswick
Julie White - Northwest Territories
Sheila Morash - Nova Scotia
Neil Christopher - Nunavut
Tim Nicholls Harrison - Ontario
Marsha Bernard - Prince Edward Island
Karine Buisson - Québec
Edith Klassen - Saskatchewan
Tina Jules - Yukon

"On behalf of all Premiers, I extend congratulations to the 2014 recipients of the Council of the Federation Literacy Award," said Robert Ghiz, Premier of Prince Edward Island and Chair of the Council of the Federation. "The hard work and accomplishments of this year's recipients, all of whom have shown an exceptional commitment to literacy, are worthy of recognition by Canadians across the country."

Premiers recognize the importance of literacy as a major factor in Canadians' ability to participate as full and active citizens in all areas of society. Established in 2004, the award celebrates outstanding contributions made by Canadians across the entire spectrum of the field of literacy, including family, Aboriginal, health, workplace and community literacy.

Each recipient receives a certificate, signed by the Premier of their province or territory, as well as a Council of the Federation Literacy Award medallion.

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The Council of the Federation comprises all 13 provincial and territorial Premiers. It enables Premiers to work collaboratively, form closer ties, foster constructive relationships among governments, and show leadership on important issues that matter to Canadians.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

2014 Council of the Federation Literacy Award Recipients

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association - Alberta

For 32 years, the dedicated staff and volunteers of the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association have been helping improve the lives of immigrant and refugee women, girls, and their families by providing programming to increase the literacy and job skills of clients. Recent immigrants face many barriers to success, and the Association strives to assist individuals in breaking through such barriers. Working collaboratively with community partners, the Association offers 36 community-based programs and projects that use a holistic approach to service delivery in areas including settlement and integration, literacy and language training, employment support and bridging programs, civic engagement and community development. Clients benefit from customized programming, and participant success rates are as high as 70-80 per cent. The Association exemplifies outstanding achievement, innovative practice, and excellence in literacy.

Anne Docherty - British Columbia

Anne Docherty has designed a people-centered approach to literacy that cultivates active citizenship. Her blending of popular and informal education allows individuals to take control of their lives and participate in the common life of their community. Docherty created a series of reflective tool kits to help literacy and community development practitioners deepen their understanding of the role that literacy plays in fostering social, cultural, economic and political participation. She has influenced how literacy progress is measured within BC. Partnering in research projects, Docherty has created a measurement tool that reflects the citizenship competencies of indigenous and remote-rural people. She teaches and mentors within Storytellers' and SFU professional school of Community-based Economic Development.

André Tourramitouyaï - Manitoba

André Tourramitouyaï arrived in Winnipeg in 2012 from the Central African Republic (via Cameroon). He had attended elementary school for three years and while he learned to speak and understand French, navigating new systems in a new country was challenging. To help him in his daily life, he enrolled in the French language literacy program, *Alphabétisation des adultes en français au Manitoba*. Tourramitouyaï is a widower with four children aged 5 to 14. His participation in the literacy program, as well as many other programs offered at Pluri-elle (Manitoba) Inc., have helped increase his confidence and reading and writing skills and he recently passed his written driver's test. Tourramitouyaï encourages his children to participate in activities, helps other adult learners with their literacy goals and is a source of inspiration for them all.

St. Croix Public Library - New Brunswick

Since its establishment in 1971, the St. Croix Public Library has supported and continues to support adult literacy by enriching the lives of learners in the greater St. Stephen area. It has established partnerships with the St. Stephen Literacy Council (providing space for tutoring and Laubach programs) and supports Charlotte County Adult Learning Inc. in their offering of GED classes. To date, these classes have helped

approximately 150 learners further their education and become more self-sufficient. English as a second language classes are also offered at the Library to immigrants and newcomers through the local Multicultural Association. The St. Croix Public Library is a huge advocate of adult literacy and remains committed to providing opportunities for learners wanting to achieve their literacy goals.

Kedgwick Public Library - New Brunswick

The Kedgwick Public Library recognizes that assisting local citizens in developing their literacy skills contributes to improving confidence and quality of life. The Library has been promoting unique literacy learning through play and participation for the last 30 years and has established partnerships with primary and secondary schools that continue to schedule routine visits. Over the past two years, the Library has specifically targeted adult literacy. They host week long literacy games created for the purpose of improving participants' reading, writing and communication skills. Improving citizens' French vocabulary and language capacity is of primary concern to the Kedgwick Public Library; however, it also provides an English conversation program to assist learners interested in improving their second language skills.

Linda Anne Richards - Newfoundland and Labrador

Linda Anne Richards attended special education classes at school where she struggled with her reading and writing skills. In 1981, she left high school to care for her nephew before choosing a career in homecare. As a homecare worker, she was challenged by her lower literacy skills. In efforts to secure long-term employment, Richards set a new life goal of completing the Personal Care Attendant program. Richards recognized that improving her literacy skills was critical to reaching her goals and enrolled in Stella's Circle ABE Level I program. She finished Level I in June 2014 and plans to continue with Level II/III. Her instructor and employment counsellor both note her remarkable accomplishments and positive attitude in the classroom.

Julie White - Northwest Territories

Julie White was born in 1977 in Fort Providence, NT, but she moved to Yellowknife as a 10-month-old after being adopted. She has been enrolled in the Literacy Outreach Centre since 1997. Through her persistence and hard work, White has achieved significant improvement in all academic areas and she is a role model for other students as she encourages them in their learning. After school, White works at the Yellowknife Association for Community Living and volunteers in community events, such as the Gumboot Rally. She is an athlete in the Special Olympics, having won medals in swimming, speed skating and bowling, and she competed in bowling at the 2014 Special Olympics National Summer Games in Vancouver.

Sheila Morash - Nova Scotia

Sheila Morash, a single mother of two, describes returning to school as her "*second chance*" to be a role model for her children and honour her late father. Although it had been over 12 years since Morash left Grade 11, she worked diligently and completed two years of study in just one year - an accomplishment of which both she and her instructors are very proud. Despite family commitments and a heavy workload, Morash still finds time to volunteer on campus and is also an active member of the PTA at her children's school. She describes her volunteer work at Habitat for Humanity, the

Prostate Cancer Run and the Salvation Army's Kettle Drive as extremely gratifying. Morash completed the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults, with honours, at the Nova Scotia Community College in May 2014 and plans to explore post-secondary career options in the near future.

Neil Christopher - Nunavut

In 2001, Neil Christopher completed his Master of Education Degree and moved to Iqaluit where he began a long career as an instructor in the Nunavut Teacher Education Program. In 2003, Christopher helped form the Nunavut Bilingual Education Society (NBES), a non-for-profit organization committed to supporting Inuit language literacy. Resources developed by the NBES are distributed free of charge to schools, libraries and daycares throughout Nunavut. In 2006, he co-founded Inhabit Media, a small company which has so far published over 150 publications (over 70 in the Inuit language). Nunavummiut now have the opportunity to read, write and share stories that reflect their own lives, language and culture. Through Inhabit Media, more and more Inuit are having their work published and recognized nationally.

Tim Nicholls Harrison - Ontario

Tim Nicholls Harrison is passionate about encouraging lifelong learning. For almost 30 years, he has been actively involved in adult upgrading initiatives as an employee of the Owen Sound & North Grey Union Public Library and its Adult Learning Centres (ALC): Grey - Bruce - Georgian. Nicholls Harrison uses his creativity, compassion and leadership skills to support a dynamic team of staff and volunteers in assisting local adults with employment and educational goals. Under his guidance and facilitation, the ALC has focused on overcoming economic barriers to learning, helping adults use ever-changing technology in their daily lives and making a difference in the community. Nicholls Harrison, the library's current CEO, enjoys spending time with family and friends. Libraries, adult education and magic are his main interests.

Marsha Bernard - Prince Edward Island

In 2007, when Marsha Bernard had the opportunity to be a participant in the Connecting Youth to Community Program, she had no idea where it would eventually lead her. Her outlook on life changed completely. Upon completion of the program, she immediately found entry level employment in the food industry. In 2010, Bernard wrote the GED tests, passing four of the five tests, but she recognized the need to complete grade 12 to obtain better employment. In 2011, she enrolled in and graduated from Career Bridges, completed her GED tests and literally "took off"! While she works seasonally, Bernard is currently on the waiting list to attend the Primary Care Paramedicine program at Holland College. Bernard is living proof of what happens when opportunity knocks and you answer the door. She has trust in herself and others to take risks, work hard and look to the future.

Karine Buisson - Québec

Through her determination, perseverance and positive attitude, Karine Buisson has become a prominent figure since joining the Cité des Mots in Shawinigan three years ago. Buisson demonstrates her enthusiasm and joy of learning through the diligence she exhibits in her learning process and in her devotion to her peers. Her approach to learning has opened doors to her future that she never thought possible before joining

the program. She notes, "I have become more and more independent and I hope that the confidence I have gained will take me further. I strongly encourage others in need not to hesitate when thinking of taking the necessary steps and joining Cité des Mots." Buisson can be proud of how far she has come!

Edith Klassen - Saskatchewan

Edith Klassen has helped many newcomers to Canada and, in particular, to the Lanigan district, in successfully transitioning to prairie communities. Her involvement in literacy first began in 2008 when she enrolled as a volunteer literacy tutor in "Saskatchewan Reads" offered through Carlton Trail Regional College. After two training sessions, Klassen began working with newcomers to help them learn English. Through her conversations with learners and their families about health, education, employment, housing, transportation, culture and integration, she realized that literacy involves more than simply learning a language. For them, it is about learning how to live in Canada. Held in high praise by the families she has helped, Klassen is recognized by her peers as an impassioned advocate for newcomers.

Tina Jules - Yukon

Tina Jules is currently the Director of Education for the Council of Yukon First Nations. She is of Tlingit, Kaska and Cree ancestry and is a member of the Dakhlaweidi (Eagle) Clan from Teslin, YK. Jules has been an educator, advocate, role model and champion for Northern learning, languages and literacy for 20 years. She is a leader in adult and First Nations literacy and has helped define what literacy means from an aboriginal perspective. In partnership with governments, post-secondary institutions and communities, Jules has helped to strengthen First Nations languages and develop culturally relevant resources and programming, including numerous Language Proficiency Programs that incorporate western and traditional methodologies. Jules personifies the concept of life-long learning, strives for fluency in her language of Tlingit, and volunteers to support adult Tlingit lessons. Her nomination is grounded in grassroots innovation and plain old hard work.

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