



Canada's Premiers Announce Literacy Award Winners for 2013

September 6, 2013 – In recognition of International Literacy Day, Canada's Premiers announced today the recipients of the ninth annual Council of the Federation Literacy Award. The award is presented in every province and territory, and recognizes outstanding achievement, innovative practice and excellence in literacy. It is awarded annually to educators, volunteers, learners, community organizations, non-governmental organizations and businesses.

Recipients of the 2013 Council of the Federation Literacy Award are:

Further Education Society – Alberta
Powell River Public Library – British Columbia
Amanda Morhart – Manitoba
Mary Hill – New Brunswick
Brigitte Martin – New Brunswick
Bertha Goulet – Northwest Territories
Celeste Axworthy – Nova Scotia
Catherine Hoyt – Nunavut
Shelley Harris – Ontario
Aleisha DeRoche – Prince Edward Island
Anne-Marie Larochelle – Québec
Phyllis Jones – Saskatchewan
Beth Mulloy – Yukon

“On behalf of my fellow Premiers, I would like to congratulate the recipients of the 2013 Council of the Federation Literacy Award,” said Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario and Chair of the Council of the Federation. “Reading and writing are the foundation for lifelong learning and success and I am so proud that we are recognizing individuals and organizations who do so much to improve the lives of Canadians.”

The award was created in 2004 to celebrate the valuable contributions made by Canadians across the entire spectrum of the field of literacy, including family, Aboriginal, health, workplace and community literacy. Premiers recognize that literacy is linked to better health outcomes, as well as greater social and civic engagement, and is a key element in enabling labour force participation and economic growth.

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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For more information:

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

2013 Council of the Federation Literacy Award Recipients

Further Education Society – Alberta

Calgary's Further Education Society (FES) demonstrates outstanding innovation and excellence in literacy. Each year FES delivers 80 programs and assists 800 individuals, including Aboriginal, English language and financial literacy learners, as well as domestic violence victims. FES focuses on formalized learning, employment opportunities and community participation by collaborating with over 35 partners, such as women's shelters, new immigrant centres and remand centres. FES "envisions a Canada where every man, woman and child reaches their potential, where every parent gets the help he or she needs, where there are no barriers to learning." The Society is a pillar of excellence for Alberta learners and the adult literacy system.

Powell River Public Library – British Columbia

Described as "the little library that could", Powell River Public Library (PRPL) exemplifies the positive impact that partnerships and collaborations have in supporting literacy throughout their community. PRPL engages a wide range of community partners to develop, deliver and support literacy programs for all ages across their region. Partners include, among others, StrongStart, Powell River School District, Powell River Youth Centre, Ahms Tah Ow First Nations School, Vancouver Island University and Vancouver Coastal Health. Through these collaborations, PRPL and their partners are able to offer a diverse selection of literacy-related activities, appealing to a variety of learning styles. PRPL demonstrates leadership in literacy, ongoing collaboration and partnerships as well as a learner-centred approach that contributes to positive literacy outcomes throughout the community.

Amanda Morhart – Manitoba

Amanda Morhart entered a literacy program at the Portage Learning and Literacy Centre in September 2012. Through her hard work and dedication she has made significant progress toward her dream of attaining her high school diploma. Morhart is a full-time mother of three, works part-time and regularly attends classes where she is upgrading her literacy skills and taking high school credit courses. As her skills have improved and confidence in her abilities has grown, she has become an active learner and volunteer at the Centre, assisting with the open house, breakfast program and fundraising for graduation. Morhart also volunteers as a Boy Scout leader and her poem "Pain" was recently published in the Write On magazine. Morhart is both a role model and an inspiration to her children and to other students.

Mary Hill – New Brunswick

Mary Hill had her first taste of adult literacy education 20 years ago and she found that adult learners were appreciative and interested in learning just about everything! Over the years, Hill has been a part of the success of the Community Adult Learning Program in the St. Stephen area, greatly impacting the students with whom she has worked. Students report that she always makes learning interesting and enjoyable and she is very patient and inspirational. It is Hill's support and guidance that convinces her students that all is possible. She says she continues to enjoy her role as an adult educator, "helping my learners realize that they are important members of our community and that they can achieve their educational and career-related goals."

Brigitte Martin – New Brunswick

Brigitte Martin has been teaching literacy for about 10 years. Very early in her career, she felt a call to help learners who were having problems reading and understanding instructions. She decided to find out more about the topic and enrolled in various training programs. Martin quickly developed expertise in learning disabilities, to the benefit of her students who were then able to face their everyday problems in the academic sphere, as well as in their social and personal lives. Students are so grateful to Martin that even several years later they return to proudly tell her of their progress and success. Their accomplishments mean a lot to her and motivate Martin to keep broadening her knowledge for the advancement of adult education.

Bertha Goulet – Northwest Territories

Bertha Goulet is a mother of five from the Yellowknives Dene Community of Ndilo, Northwest Territories. She recently returned to school after many years and has just completed the eight-month “Believe in Yourself” course, a first step towards her goal of a career in the health field. Bertha is a leader in the classroom, always encouraging and supporting her peers to do their best. She maintained a perfect attendance record for all of her courses this past year, despite her many family and job obligations. In recognition of her outstanding success in her studies she was chosen as this year’s valedictorian. In addition to being an excellent student, Bertha is a role model for others in the community; she is very active in cultural activities and as a volunteer.

Celeste Axworthy – Nova Scotia

Celeste Axworthy, an Acadian residing in the Southwestern region of Nova Scotia, left school in 1970 but eventually found the courage to return. Although her sons faced learning challenges, they overcame these obstacles, which encouraged her to do the same. An outstanding student who surpassed even her instructor’s expectations, Axworthy credits her husband of 30 years as her rock to lean on when life gets tough. Axworthy’s extensive volunteer work attests to her work ethic and commitment to excellence. In 2012–13 she was elected as Student Association President and has been voted in again for 2013–14. Axworthy graduated with a Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults in June 2013 and will attend the Continuing Care Assistant program at a Nova Scotia Community College in 2013–14.

Catherine Hoyt – Nunavut

Catherine Hoyt has been the volunteer Chair of the Friends of the Iqaluit Centennial Library since 2006. Under her leadership, the library has improved services to the community of Iqaluit and significantly increased literacy-based programs to include all of Nunavut’s official languages and all age groups from infant to adult. Attendance at these programs often reaches maximum capacity. Among Hoyt’s volunteer responsibilities is the preparation and submission of funding proposals and through her efforts, funding for literacy programs and services has grown considerably. Not only has Hoyt led the expansion of these programs, but she also runs many of the weekly programs as a volunteer. She has a Master’s in Library and Information Studies from Dalhousie University. Libraries and children’s programming, in particular, are a passion of Hoyt’s dating back to her years as a summer student working in the public library system in New Brunswick.

Shelley Harris – Ontario

Shelley Harris, Manager of Education and Employment at the YWCA St. Thomas-Elgin, has had the privilege of working in many facets of Adult Education for over 20 years. She began her career in Northern Ontario working with Aboriginal learners and has worked with women's groups, people living in poverty, newcomers, and multiple barriered learners. Harris supports client-centred programming that is accessible and flexible for all community members. Her highly skilled staff passionately advocates and supports their clients' goals while building self-awareness and participation. The YWCA has a long and solid history of leadership in community building and Harris embeds this spirit throughout her programming.

Aleisha DeRoche – Prince Edward Island

For Aleisha DeRoche, school was a challenge. "I struggled with the traditional three 'R's', reading, writing and math," she says. Understanding anything related to grammar and spelling was especially difficult and very frustrating. Her frustration resulted in poor attendance and, eventually, expulsion from the regular high school setting. At the age of 16, after a period of time in the Alternative Education Program, DeRoche dropped out of school. Six long years of wandering in the unemployment wilderness of PEI and Alberta, and "not making that million dollars I was promised out west", saw her move back home. DeRoche returned to school as an adult, completed grade 12, graduated from the Licensed Practical Nurse Program, became a mother and was accepted into the school of nursing at the University of PEI. DeRoche broke down barriers that stood in her way as a young person in the public school system. She now has consistent and reliable work in the health field and skills that will continue to grow.

Anne-Marie Larochelle – Québec

Enrolled in the *Centre d'alphabétisation populaire Matawinie Est* (East Matawinie Literacy Centre) for two years, Anne-Marie Larochelle, her instructor and her peers all attest to the benefits derived from her hard work. In addition to her progress in reading and writing, Madame Larochelle's literacy journey has helped her to gain confidence in her abilities and to take on new things in life. Madame Larochelle takes advantage of public speaking opportunities and her involvement is always appreciated by her peers. As she says, "I proved to myself that I am able to do things in life, that I am capable of learning and improving. I am very proud of myself."

Phyllis Jones – Saskatchewan

As an active volunteer at the Regina Public Library for 24 years, Phyllis Jones has helped numerous adults achieve their personal literacy goals. She has led weekly English-language tutoring sessions for new immigrants for the last 11 years, helping orient newcomers to their new home. As a result of her efforts, learners have passed GED exams, found jobs, started businesses and continued their studies at the university level. Jones' joy is sharing in the students' endeavours and watching them succeed.

Beth Mulloy – Yukon

Beth Mulloy has been strengthening literacy in Yukon for 15 years. As Executive Director of the Yukon Literacy Coalition (YLC), she is responsible for many of the territory's most popular literacy programs, including the Yukon Family Literacy Centre. Under Mulloy's leadership, the YLC delivers creative and inspiring literacy projects such as the Book Bicycle and summer reading program at Shipyards Park. She also builds active partnerships with governments, community groups and businesses both in Yukon

and across the North. She has led the creation of new Yukon research in literacy and essential skills and the delivery of programs to serve groups ranging from the incarcerated to youth. Her nominators describe her as “visionary”, “innovative” and “instrumental.” Mulloy is a champion of Yukon’s literacy community.

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