



Council of the Federation Announces Literacy Award Winners for 2011

VANCOUVER, July 18, 2011 – Canada’s Premiers today announced the recipients of the seventh annual Council of the Federation Literacy Award. Presented in each province and territory, the award celebrates outstanding achievement, innovative practice and excellence in literacy.

The recipients of the 2011 Council of the Federation Literacy Award are:

Amber Kidd – Alberta

Dee McRae – British Columbia

Michael Moore – Manitoba

A.L. Gullison Disaster Kleenup Ltd., Larry Gullison (President) – New Brunswick

Apprentissage pour adultes Chaleur Inc. – New Brunswick

Nancy Murphy – Newfoundland and Labrador

Sylvia Clement – Northwest Territories

Trena L. Simmonds – Nova Scotia

Louise Flaherty – Nunavut

Ningwakwe George – Ontario

Joan MacFarlane – Prince Edward Island

Louissette Morin – Québec

Dr. Wei He – Saskatchewan

Claire Derome – Yukon

“On behalf of all Premiers, it is my pleasure to congratulate the 2011 recipients of the Council of the Federation Literacy Award,” said Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia and Chair of the Council of the Federation. “This year’s recipients have all shown an exceptional commitment to literacy and they are worthy of recognition by Canadians across the country.”

The award recognizes the valuable contributions made by Canadians across the entire spectrum of the field of literacy, including family, Aboriginal, health, workplace and community literacy. It is presented to educators, volunteers, learners, community organizations, and businesses in each province and territory.

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.

Premiers created the award in 2004 to recognize the importance of literacy as a major factor in Canadians' ability to participate as full and active citizens in all areas of society.

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The Council of the Federation is comprised of all 13 provincial and territorial Premiers. It enables Premiers to work collaboratively to strengthen the Canadian federation by fostering a constructive relationship among the provinces and territories, and with the federal government.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

2011 Council of the Federation Literacy Award Recipients

Amber Kidd – Alberta

Amber Kidd had a desire to improve her employment situation to provide a better life and to be a role model for her four children. She set her sights on becoming a heavy equipment operator but was stalled when she was unable to pass the math component of the entrance exam. Kidd began an intense learning program with tutors from the Project Adult Literacy Society (PALS) in Edmonton, Alberta. Her undaunted personal effort, despite many challenges, gave her the math literacy skills she needed to pass the entrance exam and enter to program that would allow her to reach her goals. Thanks to her improved literacy skills, Kidd is not only employed as a heavy equipment operator but she is also able help her children with their homework and can apply her numeracy learning to her daily life.

Dee McRae – British Columbia

Dee McRae has been a valuable addition to Northwest Community College since 1994, first as an Adult Basic Education instructor, and then as Regional Literacy Coordinator. McRae has contributed to the development and funding of numerous community adult literacy programs. At the school district level, McRae was instrumental in piloting one of the province's first district literacy plans in 2007. In addition, McRae has authored publications, practitioner research reports and manuals specific to working in northern, remote-rural and aboriginal communities. McRae's unwavering commitment to literacy in BC is remarkable, contributing to a more literate society by changing the way community literacy services are delivered; designing and delivering innovative tutor training; and influencing how literacy progress is measured locally and provincially.

Michael Moore – Manitoba

Michael Moore kept the seriousness of his literacy problem hidden from everyone. He developed day-to-day strategies, often saying 'You do it, I've forgotten my glasses'. To become a bus driver, he orally memorized all 75 rules and regulations. In his 40s Moore, claiming a visual problem, asked the phone operator to help him find a literacy class. He contacted LiteracyWORKS where a tutor worked with him for three years. With increased confidence and literacy skills, Moore is now pursuing a college diploma to become a counsellor, serves on the Winnipeg Transit Critical Crisis Team and volunteers with the local suicide prevention hot-line. Moore is a fabulous example of what courage and perseverance can do.

A.L. Gullison Disaster Kleenup Ltd., Larry Gullison (President) – New Brunswick

A.L. Gullison Disaster Kleenup Ltd. is a community-minded business that believes in the power of literacy education. The company has demonstrated that belief by supporting their employees with further education and training. Larry Gullison allowed participants to attend two hours of training per week as paid work time, which for a busy construction and disaster cleanup company is no small accomplishment. Gullison provided encouragement to his staff throughout the training and even attended the first session himself to set a positive example. A.L. Gullison Disaster Kleenup Ltd. is an exceptional employer that demonstrates commitment to literacy education by providing a significant amount of human and financial resources and has promoted the importance of life-long learning to A.L. Gullison employees and to the community.

Apprentissage pour adultes Chaleur Inc. – New Brunswick

Apprentissage pour adultes Chaleur Inc. is a volunteer-led community organization employing a staff of 13 employees whose mission is to deliver adult learning services to both linguistic communities to improve literacy levels and digital literacy. The organization is known for forming strong community, government, and private partnerships. Dynamic, creative, and proactive, it spares no effort to promote the importance of literacy and motivates learners to demonstrate the benefits of continuous learning. According to the learners, it offers guidance in various aspects of life and far exceeds its primary mission, always going one step further.

Nancy Murphy – Newfoundland and Labrador

Nancy Murphy left high school at age 15 to become a full-time parent. Seven years later, she enrolled in the provincial Adult Basic Education (ABE) program where she achieved high school equivalency. She then earned a Bachelor of Education degree and began working at the Dunfield Park Community Centre as a Homework Haven and Teen Haven teacher. In November 2010, Murphy was promoted to ABE Level I instructor. From ABE student to ABE instructor, she has been a positive role model for her students. She has the unique perspective of having been in their shoes, experiencing similar challenges, and persevering to show that through hard work you can achieve your goals.

Sylvia Clement – Northwest Territories

Sylvia Clement is a 29 year old single mother of two young children who also has parental responsibility for her younger brother. Clement grew up in Tulita, NWT and has been a student at the Aurora College Learning Centre in Norman Wells for the last two years. She is punctual and hardworking and strives constantly towards her goal of achieving a secondary school diploma and attending college. Clement is an inspiring role model to others in her dual roles of parent and student and handles these two responsibilities with tremendous enthusiasm, commitment, grace and maturity. She has demonstrated her commitment to helping others improve their literacy skills through her volunteer work in the Chief Albert Wright School in Tulita and in her work in the Family Literacy Program in Norman Wells. Clement is also very involved in traditional cultural activities in both communities.

Trena L. Simmonds – Nova Scotia

Trena Simmond's first experience with graduation was when her eldest son graduated from high school. Nearly 22 years since she had left school, she enrolled in the African Canadian Transition Program, at the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC). This is a program which highlights the history, culture and achievements of people of African descent. While most students progress into the Adult Learning Program after one year, Simmonds was the first student who aspired to complete all of the required credits needed to earn a high school diploma in one academic year. She made outstanding progress and her inspirational poem about the first day in class is framed and permanently hung in the classroom. Simmonds has been accepted in the NSCC Business Administration Program.

Louise Flaherty – Nunavut

Louise Flaherty was born on a plane enroute to Frobisher Bay, Nunavut (now Iqaluit) and grew up in Clyde River. Her grandparents instilled in her a passion for Inuktitut, and an understanding that speaking Inuktitut is a fundamental part of Inuit identity. She was first introduced to English-speaking Inuit when she began visiting Frobisher Bay as a teen. Seeing Inuit who were far more literate in English than in Inuktitut sparked Flaherty's passion for the promotion and preservation of Inuktitut literacy. She was a teacher for eight years before joining the Nunavut Teacher Education Program. In 2005, Flaherty founded Inhabit Media, an independent publishing house dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Inuit knowledge and values and the Inuktitut language. Incorporated in 2006, it has since published dozens of books and Inuktitut resources used in classrooms throughout Nunavut.

Ningwakwe George – Ontario

George is a passionate visionary, inspiring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people with innovative projects. George is Anishnawbe Kwe from the Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation. She advocates the holistic approach to literacy, nurturing Spirit, Heart, Mind and Body in the learning process. She is the namesake for the non-profit organization Ningwakwe Learning Press which was founded in 1996 and publishes Aboriginal literacy material distributed all over North America. George works with ArrowMight Canada which developed innovative literacy curriculum for delivery via DVD using UNESCO award-winning Cuban literacy methodology. She has trained facilitators in sites across Canada. These are but two examples of the overwhelming success of George as a world class innovator with an outstanding commitment to literacy.

Joan MacFarlane – Prince Edward Island

Joan MacFarlane is an adult educator who personifies the literacy leader category for the Council of the Federation Literacy Award. An Education Specialist at the Provincial Correctional Centre, she has inspired many adult learners to improve their skills in literacy, in preparation to write the GED Tests, complete distance online courses from post secondary institutions and work towards their Red Seal in various trades. Under the teaching expertise of MacFarlane, those who spend time in the Correctional Centre often experience success in learning for the first time. When their sentences are completed, they return to society far stronger and with greater potential for success. Treating her students with respect and dignity, MacFarlane encourages each of them to pursue educational goals and leads them in a search for a new beginning; a beginning that promotes learning and opens doors that have otherwise been closed.

Louissette Morin – Québec

Louissette Morin dropped out of school after primary school to support her family and throughout her life, she has faced problems with literacy. Helping her eight brothers and sisters and her son with their school work; starting a new job; becoming involved in community activities: in every situation, literacy was a barrier. When she retired, Morin began literacy training at the Outaouais basic education centre (CEBO) in Gatineau. Today she is involved in a number of social and community projects and coaches adults taking training at the CEBO. Recalling a slogan from Quebec Adult Learners Week, Morin says: "It's true: learning is worth the effort!"

Dr. Wei He – Saskatchewan

Dr. He, a medical doctor from China, has shown great determination and success in her efforts to improve her English language skills. A lone parent of three daughters, she has studied English, worked full time, studied for and written the Medical Council of Canada examinations, and participated in the International Medical Graduate Preceptorship Program. Dr. He uses her medical knowledge and English skills as a volunteer within the Chinese community in Regina, translating for Mandarin-speaking patients who need assistance with the medical system. Dr. He has dealt with significant personal challenges since 2007, when she was matched with a tutor from the Literacy Unit at the Regina Public Library. She has demonstrated great diligence and commitment to learning and, as a result, her dream of practicing medicine in Saskatchewan and providing for her family is becoming a reality.

Claire Derome – Yukon

Claire Derome has been an advocate for both family and workplace literacy for many years. As Member and President of Whitehorse Rendezvous Rotary, Derome partnered with Yukon Literacy Coalition and was instrumental to the introduction and success of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in Yukon. Derome spearheaded the creation of the Family Literacy Centre, providing programming and resources to meet literacy and essential skill needs of Yukon families. As President of Yukon Chamber of Mines and Board Member of Yukon Mine Training Association, Derome advocates for literacy within the workplace and throughout the workforce. She has shown herself to be a committed community literacy worker and has dedicated herself to raising literacy levels across Yukon.

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