



Canada's Premiers Announce 2019 Literacy Award Recipients

OTTAWA, ON, September 6, 2019 – Canada's Premiers today announced the recipients of the 15th 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 2019 Council of the Federation Literacy Award are:

Project Adult Literacy Society (P.A.L.S.) – Alberta

Morie Ford – British Columbia

Elvis McKay – Manitoba

Gladys Pardy – Newfoundland and Labrador

Karen Garnett – New Brunswick

Doreen Sirois – New Brunswick

Liza Mandeville – Northwest Territories

Danita Curwin – Nova Scotia

Monica Ittusardjuat – Nunavut

Katharina Peters – Ontario

Andrew Harbord – Prince Edward Island

Camille Kamapeu Kpan – Québec

LaVera Schiele – Saskatchewan

Ted Ackerman and **Louie Smith** – Yukon

“On behalf of all of Canada's Premiers, I am pleased to congratulate the 2019 recipients of the Council of the Federation Literacy Award,” said Scott Moe, Premier of Saskatchewan and Chair of the Council of the Federation. “These individuals and organizations have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to literacy and their achievements are truly deserving of recognition.”

Premiers recognize how important literacy is to every Canadian's ability to participate as a full and active citizen in all areas of society. Created in 2004, the Award celebrates adult learners who undertake literacy training, as well as the valuable contributions made by Canadians in the field of literacy, including family, Indigenous, health, workplace, and community literacy. The Award is presented to learners, educators, volunteers, community organizations, and businesses in each province and territory.

Each Award 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

2019 Council of the Federation Literacy Award Recipients

Project Adult Literacy Society (P.A.L.S.) – Alberta

Since 1979, the Project Adult Literacy Society (P.A.L.S.) has brought together adult learners and volunteer tutors to form a foundational learning community in Edmonton. P.A.L.S. supports adult learners in the foundational learning areas of reading and writing, math, English language, and digital skills learning opportunities. The impact of P.A.L.S.' work is far-reaching as they empower students to improve daily living, build social support networks, and reach further learning and employment goals.

As a strong advocate for adult literacy, P.A.L.S. actively engages with community partners, local businesses, post-secondary institutions, and policy makers to raise awareness for the importance and potential of literacy to change lives.

Morie Ford – British Columbia

For over 30 years, Morie Ford has championed community-based literacy programs for adults and youth. She has worked as a literacy tutor, mentor, facilitator, educator and board chair. Morie helped launch the ONE TO ONE literacy program, which recruits, trains and supports volunteer tutors to work with school-aged children. She also helped incorporate the Writers' Exchange Society, a creative literacy program that connects Vancouver inner-city kids with volunteer tutors. As the current Family Outreach Coordinator at Mount Pleasant Neighborhood House, Morie works with immigrant and refugee families to provide one to one, home-based, intergenerational literacy support. According to her nominators, Morie is a compassionate change-maker who has positively impacted many people's lives through her hard work, true dedication, and big heart.

Elvis McKay – Manitoba

Elvis McKay is "an inspiration to all who struggle." From a life of truancy, addiction, crime, and incarceration, Elvis has become a positive role model for his children and community. Since he began attending literacy classes at Open Doors Adult Literacy Program and Luxton Adult Learning Program in 2018, Elvis has significantly improved his literacy and numeracy skills. His teachers describe him as a self-motivated, hardworking and respectful student with a strong work ethic. With aspirations for a rewarding career, his goals are to achieve his high school diploma and advance his employability skills. First as a volunteer with the North End Bear Clan Patrol and now as a staff member, Elvis' compassionate approach is making a difference in his community.

Gladys Pardy – Newfoundland and Labrador

Gladys Pardy enjoyed school and had dreams of being a social worker; however, at the age of sixteen she left school to help support her family financially. Last year, after working the same job for thirty-two years, Gladys returned to school to try to fulfill her educational dreams. Though apprehensive at the start of her program, as she continued, she developed strong study habits and displayed determination to succeed. She also became an active member of the student council and was known to help other students with their studies. She successfully completed Adult Basic Education ahead of schedule to obtain her high school equivalency and is currently enrolled in the Child and Youth Care Worker post-secondary program.

Karen Garnett – New Brunswick

Karen Garnett is dedicated to enhancing adult learning and literacy in New Brunswick. She is a successful and compassionate adult educator who advocates for her learners. She promotes the many programs and services available in her rural area of Carlingford. Karen has also secured funding for non-profit organizations and for special events for her learners to improve their literacy skills. Karen has motivated many learners to participate in and win a variety of writing competitions. Her dedication, love of her job, and love of those she teaches are all demonstrated in her work. It is evident that Karen is a friend and ally to her learners and will do whatever she can to ensure their success. She goes above and beyond to support her learners and colleagues at the Western Valley Adult Learning Association.

Doreen Sirois – New Brunswick

Doreen Sirois is a teacher specializing in sign language. Her sign language literacy class is the focus of the Tournesol adapted learning centre in Edmundston. Her learners have a program adapted to their hearing barriers. Her great accomplishment is to have completed her training, levels 1 to 9, in five years and passed the provincial sign language exam with a perfect mark. She was the second person in New Brunswick to be certified to give training. Doreen is very dedicated to her learners, passionate about her work, and a source of motivation for all. Her wish for people with one or more physical or psychological barriers is that they can be included in society while enjoying a better quality of life.

Liza Mandeville – Northwest Territories

Liza Mandeville is currently an adult learner student at Aurora College in Yellowknife. Liza has distinguished herself as a dedicated learner, with a joyous, persistent, and enthusiastic attitude who is open to new ways of doing things, sees mistakes as a learning opportunity, and always supports others to do their best. Liza grew up in the small town of Fort Resolution and has faced and surmounted many obstacles on her journey to academic success, including health issues, family tragedies, and financial struggles. She is a role model and an inspiration to her peers, and through hard work and perseverance she has achieved marks in the 80s in all her subjects. She will enter Grade 12 level courses in the fall.

Danita Curwin – Nova Scotia

Danita Curwin left high school before she could finish her studies. Family life and other priorities soon took over, but finishing school was always at the back of her mind. After losing her son in Afghanistan and her husband to illness, Danita returned to school to set an example for her grandchildren and to fulfill her dream of becoming an education program assistant. Danita completed her General Educational Development tests this year through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning with the help of encouraging staff. She has gained the confidence to follow her dreams and reach her full potential. The commitment to learning that Danita has demonstrated is truly an inspiration and she looks forward to giving back to her community.

Monica Ittusardjuat – Nunavut

Monica Ittusardjuat has been working in Inuktitut education for over 50 years. She has worked as a teacher at every level, from early childhood education to the Interpreter/Translator Program at Nunavut Arctic College. She served for two years as the National Inuit Language Coordinator at Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, leading a working group to study and make recommendations for orthography standards that could accommodate all dialects of Inuktitut. In her current role as Senior Inuktitut Editor at Inhabit Education, Monica oversees all Inuktitut-language materials for an Inuktitut first-language literacy program for Nunavut. She plays an indispensable role in creating materials that will help young Nunavummiut learn and practice their language. She inspires everyone around her to use Inuktitut every day.

Katharina Peters – Ontario

Katharina Peters grew up in a community in Belize where education for women was discouraged. She moved to Canada with her husband and had three children. When she and the children experienced family violence, she made the difficult decision to become a single parent. She set a goal to earn her high school equivalency certificate and become a doula so that she could help other women from her community who feel alone and isolated, as she did as a young mother. Katharina achieved a significant milestone in June 2019 when she passed the General Educational Development tests. She will begin Doula Studies at Fanshawe College in September.

Andrew Harbord – Prince Edward Island

Andrew Harbord is an inspirational young man who entered the Workplace Essential Skills Program in Summerside, PEI in September 2017 and completed the program in April 2019. Andrew completed his work with his signature outgoing and positive approach. He also served as an inspiration to others in the class who came forward to join in his nomination and share their positive interactions with Andrew as a class leader. Andrew refuses to let physical challenges with mobility and vision stand in the way of his ultimate goal of being active in the workplace. It is with this objective in mind that he approached his studies with vigour and determination. His multiple nominations from classmates, instructors, and support staff make Andrew a deserving award recipient.

Camille Kamapeu Kpan – Québec

Camille Kamapeu Kpan is a literacy student at the Découvreurs Le Phénix Adult Education Centre. Born in Côte d'Ivoire, Camille emigrated to Liberia in 2002, where she and her family lived as refugees. Upon her arrival in Canada in 2015, she began completing francization studies. Her rapid progress led her to enroll in a literacy program, where she distinguished herself through her immense desire to learn. She can now speak, read, and write in French and has mastered enough arithmetic to be able to work as a grocery store cashier. Camille aims to obtain her high school diploma and then to pursue her studies in order to become a nurse, her dream profession.

LaVera Schiele – Saskatchewan

LaVera Schiele is a family literacy volunteer whose passion for family literacy has impacted organizations and families for more than 27 years. LaVera has demonstrated a consistently innovative, forward thinking and community minded approach when developing family literacy programs. She recognizes that improving literacy is a community effort and has made it a priority to include Elders and educators in building community literacy programs. Throughout her 27 years of volunteer work, LaVera has maintained an unwavering dedication to improving family literacy programs. She is a strong advocate for literacy programs in the community of Prince Albert and continues to be involved in developing innovative approaches to reduce barriers for those who want to access literacy programming.

Ted Ackerman and Louie Smith – Yukon

Kwanlin Dün Elder Louie Smith and Ted Ackerman are a unique tutor-learner pair. Through their relationship, both have become tutors as well as learners. Age 86, Louie was raised on the land speaking Southern and Northern Tutchone. English is his third language. Ted volunteers as a tutor with Yukon Learn. He began working with Louie in March 2016, helping him fulfill his lifelong dream of learning to read. Through the process, Louie began teaching his tutor traditional stories and history. Ted has even picked up some Southern Tutchone. The pair meet twice a week at the Kwanlin Dün Kenädän Ku House of Learning. With permission of the First Nation, they have so far preserved well over 100 traditional stories of Yukon First Nations' history.

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