



Council of the Federation Announces Literacy Award Winners for 2007

August 7, 2007 – Canada's Premiers today announced the recipients of the third annual Council of the Federation Literacy Award. Presented in each province and territory, the award recognizes outstanding achievement and excellence in literacy.

The recipients of the 2007 Council of the Federation Literacy Award are:

Dr. Mary Norton – Alberta

Joan Acosta – British Columbia

Norine Moar – Manitoba

Apprentissage pour adultes Chaleur Inc. – New Brunswick

Saint John Learning Exchange – New Brunswick

HOPEworks ABE (Stella Burry Community Services) – Newfoundland and Labrador

Kadiatu Dumbuya – Northwest Territories

Julie Champagne – Nova Scotia

The Pirurvik Centre – Nunavut

Michelle Eady – Ontario

Tommy Gallant – Prince Edward Island

Sandra Trudel – Québec

Colleen Christopherson-Cote – Saskatchewan

Patty Wiseman – Yukon

"I am pleased to congratulate the recipients of this year's Council of the Federation Literacy Award," said Shawn Graham, Premier of New Brunswick and incoming Chair of the Council of the Federation. "On behalf of all Premiers, I applaud the exceptional efforts and outstanding contributions of these individuals and organizations. Their hard work and accomplishments are worthy of recognition by Canadians across the country."

The award recognizes the valuable contributions made by Canadians in the field of literacy, including family, Aboriginal, health, workplace and community literacy. It is presented to educators, volunteers, learners, community organizations, non-governmental 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.

Premiers created this award in 2004 in recognition of the importance of literacy as an essential building block to a vibrant society and economy.

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The Council of the Federation comprises all thirteen provincial and territorial Premiers. The Council 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.

To learn more, visit www.councilofthefederation.ca.

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For more information:

Nicole Picot
Office of the Premier of New Brunswick
506-453-2144
nicole.picot@gnb.ca

Loretta O'Connor
Council of the Federation Secretariat
613-563-4066
Loretta@councilofthefederation.ca

Biographical Information
2007 Council of the Federation Literacy Award Recipients

Dr. Mary Norton – Alberta

Dr. Mary Norton is an outstanding literacy practitioner with exceptional abilities to understand, advocate and promote lifelong learning through teaching, research and program development. She has been involved in adult literacy for over 30 years, during which time she tutored young women in a provincial prison, helped to establish one of Alberta's first volunteer tutor adult literacy programs and contributed to the development of adult literacy policies for the provincial government. Mary's students praise her as "down to earth and caring", saying that she is both "wise and respectful". For the last 15 years, she has co-coordinated the Learning Centre Literacy Association in Edmonton and has continuously developed and shared participatory and innovative approaches to adult literacy delivery, practitioner training and practitioner research.

Joan Acosta – British Columbia

Joan Acosta has devoted her energy to the field of adult literacy for the last 25 years. In 1982 Joan became the editor of *The Westcoast Reader*, a newspaper for adult literacy and English-as-a-second-language learners in British Columbia. As writer, researcher, editor, and desktop publisher, she has been the visionary and driving force behind this very special newspaper. Additionally, Joan has helped mentor the establishment of similar publications in Nova Scotia and Seattle. Ms. Acosta generously shares her expertise at workshops and conferences, and frequently visits classrooms throughout the Lower Mainland. Her campaign to raise awareness of literacy issues and efforts to make public information accessible to adults with low reading skills have made her a leader in the field of plain language.

Norine Moar – Manitoba

Norine Moar is a single mother of eight and grandmother of fourteen, a learner and a community volunteer. Although her formal schooling ended at about Grade 6, Ms. Moar enrolled at Swan River Adult Education, Inc. in 2006 and earned her high school diploma in June 2007. She has a natural curiosity and determination to uncover solutions and is committed to assisting others in the learning centre and in the community. Now working as an educational assistant at the centre and taking a course in counseling at the University College of the North, Norine "inspires others to love life, laugh more and appreciate the positive parts of our everyday walk."

Apprentissage pour adultes Chaleur Inc. – New Brunswick

Established in 2005, Apprentissage pour adultes Chaleur Inc. is a regional literacy committee and one of two pilot organizations established to develop a new approach to managing the delivery of adult literacy training. The organization took on the work of multiple community literacy committees and partnered with government and the private sector to improve adult literacy training in the Chaleur region. The strong leadership demonstrated by Apprentissage pour adultes Chaleur Inc. and the other pilot organization has produced a new literacy delivery model that has been adopted in all regions of New Brunswick. They created their own strategic plan to guide literacy initiatives in their region and developed a series of guidelines and procedures manuals to help other regional committees improve their adult literacy classes.

Saint John Learning Exchange – New Brunswick

Established in 1984 as a non-profit literacy education centre, the Saint John Learning Exchange aims to help people achieve their goals by providing a positive and supportive learner-centered environment. The Learning Exchange offers several programs which have helped a large number of adults improve their literacy skills, prepare for GED, the workplace and post-secondary education and improve related life skills. As well, the Learning Exchange has been a partner with Vibrant Communities Saint John in a local poverty reduction strategy. Through its programs and its partnerships with the province, city, businesses, anti-poverty groups and literacy organizations, the Saint John Learning Exchange is a dynamic and integral part of the community.

HOPEworks ABE (Stella Burry Community Services) – Newfoundland and Labrador

Stella Burry Community Services (SBCS) is an incorporated body of the United Church of Canada. This charitable, non-profit organization works with marginalized individuals in the St. John's area to empower them through education, peer support, training, employment and supportive housing to become full participants in the community. Most, if not all, of the members of the Stella Burry community face challenges in maintaining employment, availing of government services, banking, helping children with schoolwork and performing the day-to-day tasks that many of us take for granted. SBCS started to run the HOPEworks ABE program in 2005. It is an Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level I program, sponsored by the Department of Education. There have been a number of success stories, one of the most recent being that one of its students, Dennis Luther, is the recipient of the 2007 PGI Learner Achievement Award in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Kadiatu Dumbuya – Northwest Territories

Kadiatu Dumbuya's primary and secondary education was frequently interrupted by the civil war in her native Sierra Leone. After immigrating to Canada in 2000, Kadiatu enrolled in English as a Second Language courses and subsequently attended the Adult Literacy and Basic Education program at Aurora College. This year she will complete the Nursing Access program. Throughout this period, Ms. Dumbuya has worked full time, lived with a serious health condition, and volunteered in the community. She is also a champion for literacy. In the words of her instructors, "Kadi is respectful, congenial, and helpful to her classmates and instructors alike; her persistence and dedication to her chosen studies are an example to us all."

Julie Champagne – Nova Scotia

Julie Champagne returned to learning after 19 years. She left high school after Grade 10 to join the military, and later suffered a debilitating personal loss. Following confidence-building experiences volunteering at her children's school (Grade 2 Reading Program Coordinator and Girls' Basketball Coach), Julie returned to school to be a better role model and provider for her two girls. In June 2007, she received her high school diploma and was the valedictorian of her graduating class at New Glasgow Adult High School. Julie has achieved her goals: she is a positive role model for her children, and she is a high school graduate.

The Pirurvik Centre – Nunavut

The Pirurvik Centre, an Iqaluit-based company founded in 2003, is dedicated to enhancing Inuit language, culture and well-being. Pirurvik developed the Inuktitut versions of Microsoft Vista and Office 2007 software and most recently launched an Inuktitut multi-media literacy website, Tusaalanga, meaning *Let me hear it*. The website offers users around-the-world, free access to audio files of vocabulary, dialogues, grammar lessons, songs and a glossary in the Inuit language. Pirurvik's commitment to promoting and preserving the Inuit language and culture displays outstanding leadership in Nunavut where Inuktitut is most commonly spoken.

Michelle Eady – Ontario

As the Distance Projects Coordinator at the Sioux Hudson Literacy Council, Michelle Eady has worked tirelessly to ensure that any learner who is trying to further his or her education, training or independence has the chance to do so – irrespective of geographical location. Among her many accomplishments, Mrs. Eady organized the creation of a unique website offering links to online classrooms and innovative, supportive programming aimed at Aboriginal learners in remote areas. She also provides face-to-face support in remote communities. Michelle is passionate about reaching learners and helping them achieve their goals. No matter how remote they are, no matter how great their challenges, she finds a way to help literacy work for them.

Tommy Gallant – Prince Edward Island

Tommy Gallant left high school in grade 10, but never found a job that felt “right”. He completed a high school equivalency program in 1989 and then applied for admission to the University of Prince Edward Island. Mr. Gallant studied biology, earning a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in 1999 and a Master of Science in 2005. He will soon begin PhD studies. He has published multiple articles in academic journals and is the recipient of two Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) scholarships for postgraduate studies. His goal is to work as a researcher in his discipline. Through the LEAP program, Tommy mentors students who are at risk of dropping out of high school. He shows them that everyone can improve their prospects through literacy and education. His advice: “Work hard and ignore people who say you can't achieve your goals.”

Sandra Trudel – Québec

Sandra Trudel, 23, of Laverlochère, Témiscaminque has encountered many hardships in her lifetime. At the suggestion of her aunt, she decided to upgrade her skills by enrolling at the Alpha-Témis community literacy organization. Studying at Alpha-Témis has allowed Sandra to rediscover her self-confidence. Sandra indicated in her letter of candidacy for the Award that she intends to dedicate herself to the fullest, in order to both finish her education quickly and improve life in the community. Her current goal is to earn her high school diploma and go on to complete a college diploma in Social Work Techniques.

Colleen Christopherson-Cote – Saskatchewan

Ms. Christopherson-Cote first became involved in community literacy work in Saskatchewan in 1998. After moving to Coronach in 2003, she joined the Conrach Palliser Library Board and quickly became a driving force within the organization. Guided by her belief in the link between literacy and community sustainability, Colleen was instrumental in the establishment of the Prairie Literacy Awareness Network (PLAN) in 2006 and the development of a community literacy plan to respond to the literacy programming needs of the whole community. As PLAN's Executive Director, Colleen has overseen the implementation of many programs including Little Tykes Preschool, Reading Circles at school and in the library, Peer Tutoring Program for Youth, Computers for Seniors, Seniors' Books on Wheels, and online training courses for adults.

Patty Wiseman – Yukon

Patty Wiseman has made a remarkable contribution to improving literacy in the community of Teslin, Yukon. A resident for more than 20 years, Ms. Wiseman started working for the Teslin Tlingit Council (TTC) in 1996, helping to open the TTC Daycare. Last year she was instrumental in expanding the daycare into the Early Learning and Child Care Centre. Under Patty's management the Centre has been a huge success. She oversees several programs including daycare, prenatal classes, the Aboriginal Head Start program, Teslin Playschool, and Teslin Community Literacy Programs. Patty has initiated several projects that encourage families to participate and learn together, as well as multiple child-focused programs.