



## **Canada's Premiers Announce 2017 Literacy Award Recipients**

**September 8, 2017** – In honour of International Literacy Day, Canada's Premiers today announced the recipients of the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Council of the Federation Literacy Award. The award is presented to recipients from all 13 provinces and territories to celebrate outstanding achievement, innovative practice, and excellence in literacy.

The recipients of the 2017 Council of the Federation Literacy Award are:

Lethbridge Public Library – Alberta  
Project Literacy Kelowna Society – British Columbia  
Christian Haines – Manitoba  
Rosalie Simon – Newfoundland and Labrador  
Lise Beaulieu – New Brunswick  
Howard Lane – New Brunswick  
Scott Atigikyoak – Northwest Territories  
Jocelyne Boutilier – Nova Scotia  
Elizabeth Dean – Nunavut  
The LearningHUB – Ontario  
Shawn Stewart – Prince Edward Island  
La Fondation pour l'alphabétisation – Québec  
Marilyn Stearns – Saskatchewan  
Peter Morawsky – Yukon

"I am pleased to congratulate the recipients of the 2017 Council of the Federation Literacy Award," said Rachel Notley, Premier of Alberta and Chair of the Council of the Federation. "The hard work and achievements of this year's recipients, all of whom have shown an exceptional commitment to literacy, are truly deserving of this recognition."

Created by Premiers in 2004, the Award recognizes the important role that literacy plays in facilitating Canadians' participation as full and active citizens in all areas of society. 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, Aboriginal, 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.

- MORE -

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.

- 30 -

**For more information:**

**Lindsay de Leeuw**

Senior Project Manager

Council of the Federation Secretariat

(613) 563-4066

[lindsay@canadaspremiers.ca](mailto:lindsay@canadaspremiers.ca)

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

### **2017 Council of the Federation Literacy Award Recipients**

#### **Lethbridge Public Library – Alberta**

The Lethbridge Public Library has provided family and adult literacy programs for over 30 years. The capacity and ability of the organization to respond to current community literacy and foundational learning needs is reflected in its program growth. During the past 13 years, through its volunteer-supported Read on Adult Literacy Program, 2,670 adult learners have increased their literacy and essential skills levels, and many have continued on to post-secondary learning. To connect with and better serve First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples living in Lethbridge and the surrounding area, the library has engaged in partnerships with a number of organizations, including Indigenous partners, to develop and deliver three Indigenous programs designed to improve literacy skills and celebrate Indigenous traditions, language, and culture.

#### **Project Literacy Kelowna Society – British Columbia**

Project Literacy Kelowna Society was the first independent literacy organization chartered in British Columbia. The organization provides a wide range of learning opportunities to over 400 people annually across the Central Okanagan Region with the support of its 150 volunteers. Project Literacy Kelowna Society provides free tutoring in reading, writing, language proficiency, digital literacy, math skills and financial literacy to families from different national and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, it takes into account learners' different needs, objectives and learning styles to customize an educational experience that best fits them. Project Literacy Kelowna Society promotes life-long learning, instilling literacy skills while building community ties.

#### **Christian Haines – Manitoba**

Christian Haines enrolled in upgrading classes in 2015 with two goals in mind: to successfully write his General Educational Development (GED) high school equivalency tests and to enrol in courses in preparation for a career in addictions counselling. As Haines made significant strides in the program, his confidence increased. As a single parent, he not only persisted with attending literacy classes, but also became a peer tutor and enrolled in additional courses to further his literacy skills and personal development. In an effort to assist the community with a growing Fentanyl drug problem, he shared his story with the media. Recently, Haines obtained his GED certificate and he is now enrolled to train as an addictions counselor.

#### **Lise Beaulieu – New Brunswick**

Lise Beaulieu, who is blind, has been an instructor for 15 years at the Centre d'apprentissage adapté pour adultes at the Atelier Tournesol in Edmundston. She implemented the Braille Literacy Program in the northwest, which has four levels: introduction to pre-braille, learning braille, specialized computer, and the logistics of the iPhone. Beaulieu helps people with visual barriers to improve their reading and writing skills, as well as their knowledge in how to access post-secondary training or a job. Aware that it is important to respect the learners' pace and their differences, she delivers the

program according to their needs and level of knowledge, while showing them the many opportunities that are open to them. Beaulieu conveys courage, strength of character, and resilience to the learners through her teaching.

### **Howard Lane – New Brunswick**

Howard Lane's educational philosophy, authentic application and practical approach evokes his compassion and advocacy for adults who may occasionally be marginalized from mainstream society due to physical, social, or emotional issues. Lane is a true hero to many learners in the Miramichi Region. He launched the Cooking to Learn Program as well as other initiatives, including the national award-winning program Achieve. Lane's dedication, love for what he does, and love for who he teaches is exemplary in his usual quiet way. When you mention his learners to him, you know Lane is their friend and ally and will do whatever he can to allow the learner to discover themselves from within.

### **Rosalie Simon – Newfoundland and Labrador**

Since returning to school, Rosalie Simon has successfully demonstrated that anything is possible with dedication and hard work. Growing up, Simon faced many obstacles due to her lack of education. She decided she wanted to improve her life and first sought assistance from the Vera Perlin Society. She later began Adult Basic Education, completing Level I at Stella's Circle and moving on to Levels II and III at the Discovery Centre. During her time in the program, Simon's instructors noted that she made incredible progress, translating into academic success, increased self-confidence and a willingness to help others. She is considered a role model by many of her peers. Simon received her high school equivalency diploma in May 2017 and is considering post-secondary education in the future.

### **Scott Atigikyoak – Northwest Territories**

Scott Atigikyoak is a man of Inuit descent from the small community of Norman Wells, Northwest Territories. Atigikyoak entered college in September 2016 and worked extremely hard to develop the necessary academic skills to be successful. Today, he has become a role model for fellow students. He has demonstrated an outstanding work ethic through completing every assignment on time, having excellent attendance, spending hours in the library, and working with tutors on extra assignments. He is known for inspiring his fellow students and helping them excel. Atigikyoak has been accepted into the Environment and Natural Resource Technology Program at Aurora College for the next academic year and plans to pursue a career in the environmental field in the Northwest Territories.

### **Jocelyne Boutilier – Nova Scotia**

Jocelyne Boutilier's childhood was exceptionally challenging, as she struggled to balance her role as ad hoc parent to five siblings as well as trying to raise two young children of her own. Although the pressures of family life led her to leave school, she challenged herself to read and write to the best of her ability and eventually enrolled at Bridgewater Adult High School where she completed the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults. Her efforts have led to life-changing opportunities and much success as a student. Boutilier is the proud recipient of the Governor General's Award and is

grateful for the bursary received from the South Shore Regional School Board as well as an entrance scholarship from Dalhousie University. She has been accepted into the Bachelor of Nursing Program at Dalhousie University and continues to set new goals for herself, hoping to eventually pay her good fortune forward by working as a psychiatric nurse.

### **Elizabeth Dean – Nunavut**

Elizabeth Dean is a long-term teacher in Nunavut, and has taught in both Gjoa Haven and Iqaluit. A decade ago, Dean began work on implementing a guided reading system. She created a very successful program and took it upon herself to train her fellow teachers on how to plan, keep proper records and implement guided reading. Under her guidance, educators saw students make great progress. Her program also made its way to other communities, where she selflessly shared her knowledge and gave her time. Since moving to Iqaluit, Dean has created an amazing literacy space for the students of Aqsarniit Middle School to read and thrive under the program. All this has happened without expectation of recognition, based on her commitment to improving literacy in Nunavut. Dean was nominated for this award by the principal of her school in gratitude for her perseverance and dedication.

### **The LearningHUB – Ontario**

Since its establishment in 2007, the LearningHUB has provided online Literacy and Basic Skills programming to over 20,000 adult learners across Ontario. This reach includes those living in rural and remote communities where classroom programs are not accessible and those in urban areas who may be challenged with physical, emotional or scheduling barriers that restrict them from attending a classroom program. Over the past decade, the LearningHUB's catalogue of programming has expanded to over 260 live classes, "anytime learning" courses and interactive tutorials covering a variety of academic and employability topics. The LearningHUB's staff work out of the Centres for Employment and Learning of the Avon Maitland District School Board, connecting them to the full suite of programs offered and funded by Ontario's Learning Ministries.

### **Shawn Stewart – Prince Edward Island**

Shawn Stewart was a recent participant in the Workplace Essential Skills Program in Charlottetown who showed an exemplary commitment to the program and its ideals. During his participation in the program, Stewart wrote and passed his General Educational Development math exam. He then became the fourth client in Workplace Learning's history to complete the Reading Horizons program. Stewart's incredible focus, wisdom, professionalism and sense of humour made him a natural leader and role model within the classroom. His commitment to the program and his honesty about his own learning struggles made him highly respected and sought after by his classmates who often turned to him for advice and support. His advice to others: "*Do the work. Be open to feedback. Stay humble. Never give up.*"

**La Fondation pour l’alphabétisation (for the *La lecture en cadeau* program) – Québec**

By publicly promoting the importance of introducing books and reading to children from an early age, La lecture en cadeau program contributes significantly to the promotion of literacy among young people from the most vulnerable families in Québec, as well as their family members. Since 1999, the program has distributed thousands of new books to children aged 0 to 12 years living in disadvantaged areas. To date, more than 440,000 books, which are donated by the public and collected each year across the province, have been provided.

**Marilyn Stearns – Saskatchewan**

Marilyn Stearns is a passionate Family Literacy leader who has contributed to building and strengthening family literacy development in Saskatchewan and Canada. Through her unwavering efforts at the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, Stearns has made a measurable impact over the past 10-plus years, having travelled thousands of miles to provide family literacy workshops to nearly 900 participants and led many significant projects to support a thriving community of family literacy practice in Saskatchewan. Her work with diverse communities has inspired the creation of specialized family literacy programs including the “Pre-Natal Caring Circle” and “Inspiring Play”, as well as numerous plain language resources. A role model to many, Stearns is a lifelong learner who continues to find innovative ways to mentor new family literacy practitioners and provide support to families, schools, libraries and community organizations.

**Peter Morawsky – Yukon**

Peter Morawsky is a literacy advocate who believes that everyone should have the ability to fully function in today’s society. In 2003, Morawsky joined the board of the Yukon Public Legal Education Association and contributed to the organization in various leadership roles until 2012. Since 2004, he has served on the Yukon Learn Society’s board of directors in various capacities and has been instrumental in facilitating the overall growth of the organization. Morawsky’s leadership led to a partnership between those organizations for projects such as the Self-Advocacy for Women in the Legal System program. He was also heavily involved in the development of the publication “Splitting Up, the Yukon Law on Separation”. Morawsky’s willingness to assist in the advancement and success of others has made him a true Yukon literacy champion.

- 30 -

**For more information:**

**Lindsay de Leeuw**

Senior Project Manager

Council of the Federation Secretariat

(613) 563-4066

[lindsay@canadaspremiers.ca](mailto:lindsay@canadaspremiers.ca)