

NWT Literacy Awards

What are the awards and when were they created?

The Ministerial Literacy Awards recognize excellence in, and commitment to, literacy in the areas of youth learner, educator and organization. They were created by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) in 2002.

The Council of the Federation (COF) Literacy Award was created in 2005 by the Premiers of Canada to recognize success in literacy. In the Northwest Territories, this award is given to an adult learner.

Why is adult education important? Why does the NWT encourage adult education?

Adult education increases opportunities for residents to improve their literacy and basic skills, in order to lead productive lives and contribute to a strong Northern workforce.

Adult education allows residents to actively participate in their communities and be a positive role model for their families.

Adult education courses are available in 26 communities through the Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) program. ALBE is delivered by Aurora College, Non-Government Organizations and the Department of Justice. Adult Educators work with communities to plan programming that meets their needs.

What current/future initiatives are planned to increase adult education opportunities and successes?

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is undertaking Education Renewal, which will have long-term, positive effects on future generations of adults as they leave school.

ECE is implementing an ALBE program review action plan which includes:

- modularization of the curriculum so that adults have flexibility to complete/track their successes throughout the courses;
- revisions to curriculum to ensure continual, ongoing quality improvement; and
- curriculum designed to meet the needs of adult learners.

The Adult Recognition Model is an alternate pathway for completing an NWT Senior Secondary Diploma through a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process, in partnership with Aurora College.

Media requests for interviews with Members of the Executive Council may be directed to:

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There are Literacy Outreach Programs at each of the three Aurora College campuses, delivered in partnership between Aurora College and the Yellowknife Association for Community Living.

Financial Literacy Modules are being delivered in communities to enable adults to manage their finances through to retirement.

The Northern Adult Basic Education (NABE) initiative, delivered through Aurora College with funding from CanNor, complements the work ECE is doing with the ALBE Review, including development of short-term courses with embedded literacy.

ECE and the NWT Literacy Council are developing programming for out-of-school and at-risk youth (includes adults to age 25) in small communities.

ECE is developing an accountability framework for the education and training of adults in the NWT to improve planning, monitoring and evaluation of programming effectiveness and access.

2014 Award Recipients

Council of the Federation Literacy Award NWT – Julie White

Julie White was born on February 3, 1977 in Fort Providence, Northwest Territories. She was adopted by Jim and Helen White when she moved to Yellowknife as a 10-month-old. She has been enrolled in the Literacy Outreach Centre since 1997. Through her persistence and hard work, Julie has achieved significant improvement in all academic areas. Julie is a role model for other students and encourages them in their learning.

After school, Julie works at the Yellowknife Association for Community Living and volunteers in community events, such as the Gumboot Rally. She is an athlete in the Special Olympics; has won medals in swimming, speed skating and bowling; and competed in bowling at the 2014 Special Olympics National Summer Games in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Professional Educator – Micheline Ricard

Micheline Ricard is more than your average Language Arts teacher. She is well-travelled, well-read and an exceptional writer and orator. She instills a love of culture and learning and fosters an appreciation for everything associated with literacy.

She has assisted students with preparing and writing the Advanced Placement French Language and Culture exam, organized and participated in French speech contests at the school, territorial and national levels, and is a member of the French Steering Committee. She has been the grades 9-12 French Language Arts Teacher at Ecole Sir John Franklin School for 17 years.

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Volunteer Educator – Mark Salvor

Mark Salvor registered as a literacy volunteer in December 2012 and has provided invaluable services to clients with their needs and literacy and career goals. During all of his work with clients, he has provided service above and beyond expectation, often helping with personal crises and job placements. One client called Mark “a source of tremendous inspiration and mentorship”.

The level of dedication, commitment and professionalism that Mark delivers to all of his clients reflects the high standards he sets for both himself and his clients.

Literacy Champion – Helen Balanoff

Helen Balanoff has contributed for 40 years to education and literacy in the NWT. She has been an educator, policy developer, administrator, writer, researcher and literacy advocate. Helen has consistently supported and promoted the cultural, educational and personal development of her students, coworkers and those served by the community-based projects she has supported.

She began her northern career as a teacher in Cambridge Bay in 1973, and has worked for the Department of Education, taught in China and has helped drive initiatives like the Uluhaktok Literacies Project and the pan-northern collaboration, the Northern Alliance for Literacy and Essential Skills (NALES). She became the Executive Director of the NWT Literacy Council in 2009 and was awarded the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012 for her contributions to education and literacy.

Organization – Tuktoyaktuk Community Learning Centre

Through the efforts of Greg Gidman, adult educator and instructor Robyne Leblanc, the Tuktoyaktuk Community Learning Centre (CLC) has become a hub for quality learning, support and guidance.

Through their dedication and passion, they have helped many adult learners realize their goals and obtain employment. Any learners registering for courses offered at the CLC should be prepared to fully participate and engage in their in-depth and innovative teaching methods. Additionally, Greg had made it a priority to include the Inuvialuktun language in his courses, and Robyne has used approaches like a mock Dragon’s Den for budding entrepreneurs taking courses at the Centre.

Youth – Deninu School

The students at Deninu School, led by their teacher Angie Fabien, have made it a goal to promote and revitalize the Chipewyan language in Fort Resolution. With dedicated and passionate efforts from Ms. Fabien, these students have taken on the task of moving the language out of the school and into the community.

They converse with their parents and grandparents in their homes and use it among themselves everywhere they go. Parents and Elders are delighted that the language is experiencing a resurgence after

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being lost for more than a generation. Chipewyan literacy rates in Fort Resolution have increased by 23% over the last number of years, due in large part to students' commitment to the language.

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