

June 20, 2013

Persons with Developmental Disabilities, Edmonton Region Community Board announces regional award winners

PDD Edmonton Regional Awards Program

Edmonton... Persons with Developmental Disabilities, Edmonton Region Community Board (PDD Edmonton) recognized four individuals, one organization and a family at its PDD Edmonton Regional Awards ceremony on June 19, 2013.

The award winners were recognized for their actions to promote community inclusion and improve the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. Awards were handed out in five categories: self advocacy, individual leadership, community citizenship, community disability service sector leadership and family leadership. The six winners were chosen from a total of 10 nominees.

The awards ceremony was held at the PDD Edmonton's main office in conjunction with PDD Edmonton's regular public board meeting.

The *Self Advocacy Award* was presented to Robert Lupul of Edmonton. The award recognizes an adult with a developmental disability whose actions have made communities a more welcoming place for people with developmental disabilities.

In addition to working as an employee at Dairy Queen, Mr. Lupul is a tireless worker in the community through the numerous volunteer roles he plays. He welcomes the opportunity to share his story with others to show that people with developmental disabilities can use natural supports in employment and be successful.

Mr. Lupul is the chairperson for the Speak Out Advocacy Team at the Winnifred Stewart Association, a director on the Lions International Board and a director on the Special Olympics Alberta Board.

Mr. Lupul's nominator, Lynn Wade, said, "Robert is highly recognized in his community because he has supported so many events that build community. He has opened up doors to many of his peers because he initiates conversation and allows people to better understand those who have a disability, which is the best for advocacy."

The *Individual Leadership Award* went to Marjorie Thompson of Edmonton. The award recognizes an adult with a developmental disability who, through their achievements, has inspired others with developmental disabilities to become community leaders.

Ms. Thompson is a committed employee, dedicated fiancée, and supportive friend. Though challenges come, she pushes beyond the barriers and has accomplished much. Ms. Thompson has always been an active advocate and is a member of the Self Advocacy Federation and Albertan Advocating for Change Together. She is also a past member of the Self Advocacy Federation steering committee.

Susan Dunnigan, in support of Marjorie's nomination, said, "Marjorie readily and frequently uses her skills of empathy and self-advocacy to help others in countless situations, in both work and the community at large. She does not hesitate to voice concerns about social injustice that she encounters, witnesses or hears about. Although her knees might be knocking, she stands tall and is counted – a sure sign of a true leader. I am proud to know her."

The *Community Citizenship Award* was presented to the Donna Palfrey of Edmonton. The award recognizes community members, businesses or organizations that have demonstrated leadership in creating communities that welcome adults with developmental disabilities as participating citizens.

Nominator Patti Schimpf described Ms. Palfrey as someone who fully embraces the values of community living and truly recognizes the benefits of this philosophy for individuals who live with an intellectual disability.

As a family facilitator with the Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN), Ms. Palfrey works with several families, but it is what she does above and beyond her job description that makes her an inspiration for so many. She provides opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities to explore their communities, learn new skills and take risks to try things they never thought possible.

In a letter supporting Ms. Palfrey's nomination, Bruce Koliger noted, "In an age when children and adults look up to athletes and celebrities for inspiration, it's more important to recognize those in our community who really make a difference. I can't think of a more deserving recipient for the Community Citizenship Award."

The *Community Disability Service Sector Leadership Award* was presented to two winners this year, Vickie Mancini of Spring Lake, Alberta and St. Albert's Lo-Se-Ca Foundation for its Rafiki Project. The award recognizes an organization or individual who has introduced innovation or best practice strategies that have improved the delivery of services for adults with developmental disabilities.

In her nomination information Ms. Mancini is described as someone who embodies true selflessness and is never afraid to put her job or herself on the line in exchange for preserving the dignity of those around her.

Ms. Mancini's contributions in the disability sector span the decades as an advocate, a mentor, a teacher, friend, confidant, leader and "rock" encourager who empowers people. Her list of roles and contributions is endless. Her approach has been described as unique, because it is not about policy, or a new initiative or program. It is about believing in people and helping to show them how to believe in themselves.

The following is taken from a letter, from the Lozowy family, supporting Ms. Mancini's nomination, "Our son's quality of life is the best it can be, mostly due to Vickie and her genuine level of continued commitment to our son and his well-being. Vickie's passion makes her a leader, improving the quality of life for all people with developmental disabilities."

The Lo-Se-Ca Foundation's unwritten mission is to help others. From their employees who recently emigrated from Africa, Lo-Se-Ca had an opportunity to hear about challenges facing disabled people in Africa. These stories were the seeds for the Rafiki Project, which started two years ago.

The project was to climb of Africa's highest peak, Mt. Kilimanjaro, in support for the Brothers of Charity's Bangwe House in Kigoma, Tanzania, a charity that provides for the most basic needs of orphaned children and youth with disabilities. The project was open to anyone who wanted to help. Six individuals with developmental disabilities joined the project and started preparation for the trip of their lives through many fundraising events, planning sessions and much dedicated work.

In his letter supporting the nomination Ron Bourret shared the following: "Our journey has given inspiration to others to want to help those who are less fortunate. The individuals with disabilities who took part in this project and helped to volunteer and raise funds for the children of Bangwe House have changed perceptions and shown others that despite whatever challenges one faces, they have a lot to give back to society. The motivation this will provide to others in the community to similarly want to help those in need will indeed be on one of the legacies of the Rafiki Project."

The *Family Leadership Award* was presented to the McRorie Family of Edmonton. The award recognizes a family who has demonstrated leadership in developing welcoming communities.

The McRorie Family has carved a new path for inclusive education at the high school level. Their daughter, Tasia, was the first recipient of the *Certificate of School Completion* from Alberta Education, recognizing her completion of high school in an inclusive setting. Their daughter, Jessy, also completed and received her high school diploma in a completely inclusive school setting.

Sandie Price, Manager, Education and Awareness, for the Gateway Association said, “In my opinion one of the most essential components to Family Leadership is the commitment and ability to lead by example. Ward, Leah, Jessy, Tasia and Shawnay, in all aspects of their day to day exemplify this practice. They work tirelessly to ensure that not only are communities welcoming for their own members who experience intellectual disability, but they are also committed to ensuring this is the case for all.”

Tami Dowler-Coltman, the principal at the Victoria School of the Arts, said in her letter, “As a school community we are very proud and inspired by this family, and more specifically by the beautiful young women they have raised. Their leadership has inspired others to question, to seek creative solutions and to challenge the status quo. The McRories inspire us to find our voice for advocacy for the inclusion of others with developmental disabilities and it is with the greatest respect for their leadership in this area that I support this nomination.”

The winners of the PDD Edmonton Regional Awards, along with regional winners from the other five PDD regions, will automatically be submitted as nominees for the PDD Provincial Community Leadership Awards. The provincial awards will be handed out later in 2013.

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Persons with Developmental Disabilities, Edmonton Region Community Board (PDD Edmonton) recognized four individuals, one organization and a family at its fourth annual regional awards ceremony on June 19, 2013.

The award winners were recognized for their actions to promote community inclusion and improve the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. Awards were handed out in five categories: self advocacy, individual leadership, community citizenship, community disability service sector leadership and family leadership.

The awards were presented by PDD Edmonton's Director of Operations, Louise Butler, and PDD Edmonton's Board Chair, Blair Lundy.



Robert Lupul (centre) was named the winner of the 2013 Self Advocacy Award. PDD Edmonton's Board Chair, Blair Lundy, (left) and PDD Edmonton's Director of Operations, Louise Butler, (right) made the presentation.



Marjorie Thompson (centre) won the 2013 Individual Leadership Award. She is pictured with PDD Edmonton's Board Chair, Blair Lundy, (left) and PDD Edmonton's Director of Operations, Louise Butler, (right).



Donna Palfrey (centre) won the 2013 Community Citizenship Award. PDD Edmonton's Board Chair, Blair Lundy, (left) and PDD Edmonton's Director of Operations, Louise Butler, (right) made the presentation.



There were two winners of the 2013 Community Disability Service Sector Leadership Award. Lo-Se-Ca Foundation's Rafiki Project was one of the winners. Pictured (left to right) are Blair Lundy, James Fenton, Pie Buzubona, Jonathan Hamilton, Andrew McKerlie, Steven Wozney, Lori Marion and Louise Butler.



Vickie Mancini (centre) was also a 2013 Community Disability Service Sector Leadership Award winner. PDD Edmonton's Board Chair, Blair Lundy, (left) and PDD Edmonton's Director of Operations, Louise Butler, (right) made the presentation.



The 2013 Family Leadership Award went to the McRorie Family. Pictured (left to right) are Blair Lundy, Shawnay McRorie, Leah McRorie, Jessy Wells, Ward McRorie and Louise Butler. Taisa McRorie is pictured in front with the award.