



NWT Literacy Awards 2022 Recipients



Outstanding Educator – Diana Gargan

Diana Gargan has been teaching at Deh Gáh school in Fort Providence for many years. Diana has taught in the language immersion program and, over the years, has done much professional development on the topic of language learning. She actively promotes and encourages language learning for all staff. In the past three years, Diana has set a goal to increase literacy levels in her school and has worked tirelessly in this pursuit. Diana's literacy intervention and teaching in the primary grades is setting a foundation for success in learning for the whole school.

Diana gently encourages parents and she uses the relationships she has fostered with her community to improve attendance and learning. During the pandemic, she successfully contacted many parents to encourage them to continue supporting learning through school closures.

Outstanding Educator – Georgina Franki

Georgina Franki is a Tłıchǫ elder, born and raised in the Northwest Territories. Since starting with College Nordique Francophone in 2019, Georgina has grown enrolment in her language classes. Her classes consist of Tłıchǫ citizens wanting to learn their language and newcomers to the territory interested in learning Tłıchǫ.

Georgina is helping to create innovative ways of teaching and revitalizing one of the 11 Official Languages of the Northwest Territories. Georgina and Rosie Benning led the creation of a Tłıchǫ workbook, one of the first of its kind - Tłıchǫ Yatı̀ eyıts'ǫ Dǫ Nàowòd. This workbook can be used in so many ways by different people: elders, adults, young adults and teenagers, and even by parents to help teach their children and future generations.

Second Language Learner – Bertha Drygeese

Bertha Drygeese is a participant in the Mentor Apprenticeship Program (MAP) where she is learning her Indigenous language of Wiliideh. Bertha has worked with both her mother (Elder, Mary Louise Drygeese) and her sister (Mary Rose Sundberg), completing over 275 hours of language learning time. Throughout her learning, she's increased her proficiency in her Indigenous Language while developing stronger connections to her family, community and culture. In the 2022-23 program, Bertha applied to participate for a third year, but this time as a mentor to her daughter instead of as an apprentice!

Bertha believes that learning languages is a lifelong journey. Speaking her language makes her feel physically, mentally and spiritually strong; strengths she can pass on to her daughter. Not only has Bertha contributed to her own personal literacy by participating in the MAP, but she has also taken her second language learning a step further and brought it into her family and community. Bertha's language learning journey, which has taken her from learner to teacher, has allowed her to take back what was taken away from her.

Council of the Federation Literacy Award – Western Arctic Youth Collective

The Western Arctic Youth Collective (WAYC) is a youth-led collaborative focused on empowering youth in the Beaufort Delta region of the Northwest Territories. WAYC promotes family, Indigenous, health, and community literacy through its unique programming. The group promotes oral literacy through its virtual book clubs that invite participants to take turns reading the book aloud together.

WAYC also promotes digital literacy through workshops on podcasting and video editing, land-based literacy skills through wilderness and leadership camps, and Indigenous language revitalization through events like Language Bingo and Language Scavenger Hunt and by distributing language learning kits. WAYC promotes strong mental health literacy through virtual wellness check-ins and annual workshops that include discussions on addictions, mental health and suicide, as well as life promotion and community empowerment.