



June 9, 2020

Saskatchewan Youth Projects Receive Awards

Lieutenant Governor Russ Mirasty and Prairieaction Foundation (PAF) today announced the following Saskatchewan recipients of the 2020 PAF Youth Leadership Awards:

- Clearwater Project Venture Youth Mentors, Clearwater River Dene Nation
- Collection Builders for Social Justice, Carlton Comprehensive High School, Prince Albert
- The Daily Difference, Kelli Lemstra, Alliance Health, Moose Jaw
- I'mperfect – Imperfect: Understand Us, St. Gregory Elementary School, Regina
- Peer Support Volunteers, Churchill Community High School, La Ronge

“I am very impressed by these creative and inspiring projects, which address issues facing young people today,” said Lieutenant Governor Mirasty. “I congratulate each of the recipients on this well-deserved recognition! I’m grateful to Prairieaction for celebrating achievement, and for encouraging youth to contribute and to create solutions.”

PAF was formed in response to the 1989 Montreal Massacre. PAF raises and grants funds for community-based research in the three prairie provinces into the causes of and solutions to violence and abuse. Action-oriented research is helping find effective ways to reduce the cycle of violence and keep individuals safe. His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty is the Honorary Patron of PAF in Saskatchewan. Visit www.prairieaction.ca for more information.

The PAF Youth Leadership Award recognizes young people who demonstrate leadership in making their schools, neighborhoods, and communities safer by raising awareness about abuse and violence, promoting healthy and safe relationships, and/or developing innovative approaches to violence prevention. In addition to public recognition, recipients receive up to \$3000 to continue, expand, or duplicate their award-winning project, or to initiate a new activity. Through the Youth Leadership Award, PAF hopes to encourage more young people to become involved in ending the cycle of violence.

Award recipient information attached.

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2020 Prairieaction Foundation Youth Leadership Award Saskatchewan Recipients

Clearwater Project Venture Youth Mentors Clearwater River Dene Nation

This Project is an outdoor/experiential program for students in grades 6 to 8, with assistance from high-school students who graduate into mentors. The program is guided by traditional values such as family, learning from nature, spiritual awareness, service to others, and respect. Youth develop a positive self-image, effective communication skills, community service ethic, improved decision-making and problem-solving skills, and personal resilience. The project involves four multi-day camps per year with an average of 20 students and 4 mentors per camp.

Collection Builders for Social Justice Carlton Comprehensive High School, Prince Albert

An Art teacher challenged her students to build collections of art, complete a formal statement of intent about the collection, and submit their work to galleries in their community. The project led to improved student attendance, as students were committed to a goal. Their confidence improved, they began to take ownership of explaining their art to others, and their conversations shifted to creating understanding and aiding the journey to reconciliation. They became more self-aware and were better able to examine the dynamics in their relationships. There are over 20 students who are completing collections within the school. One student was recently recognized for her work and was given an opportunity to paint a large mural for the local mall.

The Daily Difference Alliance Health, Moose Jaw/Saskatoon

This project began in 2016 when 15-year-old Kelli Lemstra was looking for a way to deal with the challenges of bullying and mental health. She realized that youth need more resources and opportunities for help. With her father's assistance, Kelli created an on-line application. "The Daily Difference" app connected youth with mental health professionals, including a chat function and option for anonymity. Kelli connected with the Moose Jaw Police Service, which provides legal advice or aid. As of January 2020, the "Daily Difference" app has over 2500 users who have found much-needed help and support.

I'mperfect – Imperfect: Understand Us St. Gregory Elementary School, Regina

Students involved in this successful 3-year initiative at St. Gregory Elementary School have attracted much attention for their work involving youth mental health, and have been invited to speak at conferences and in classrooms around Saskatchewan. Students speak about their own vulnerabilities and insecurities, and invite students to work together to create change and awareness. The goal of this newest project in the series is to realize the differences between how students perceive themselves and how others perceive them. They will discover invisible barriers, uniqueness, and that none of us is alone. Facilitators will provide workshops and lessons on self-love, healthy relationships, self-regulation, and physical health, and students will create videos and speeches to present at a gala event.

Peer Support Volunteers
Churchill Community High School, La Ronge

This project provides support, information, or referrals for students regarding issues such as addiction, sexual wellness, family conflict, and bullying. They run year-long activities with themes relating to mental health. The volunteers are trained at a self-care retreat each spring on topics such as identity and suicide awareness. One of their successful programs in the past year, “Music for Mental Health,” featured local and school talent. As well, they presented to the Embracing Life Committee, and led 5 noon-hour events and a dance that supported healthy relationships. Experienced Peer Support Volunteers, who have branded clothing to identify them, assist in the training of the new Peer Support Volunteers.