



RHF announces winners of its 2021 Difference Maker of the Year Awards

The award recognizes educators, community leaders and students making a difference in the area of inclusion and accessibility

June 4, 2021 (Richmond, BC) – Today, to mark link: [National AccessAbility Week](#), the Rick Hansen Foundation has announced twenty of its School Program link: [2021 Difference Maker of the Year Award](#) winners. For the first time in the history of its annual awards program, winners are awarded from every province across Canada, as well as Nunavut.

Thanks to support from Co-Presenting Partners Boston Pizza Foundation Future Prospects and Scotiabank, the RHF School Program (RHFSP) Difference Maker of the Year Awards are presented annually at the end of the school year to K-12 educators and students who have improved accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities in their school or wider community. This year, the award was expanded to include community leaders.

Jill Wurflinger, Director of the Rick Hansen Foundation School Program, said: “Every year, we are humbled to read the inspiring stories of Canadian youth, educators, and youth leaders who are driven to improve the accessibility and inclusion of their communities – and this year was no exception. Nominations ranged from difference makers who have spread awareness about sledge hockey and wheelchair basketball, to educators who supported students with disabilities with their university education, to community leaders who advocate for accessible sport.

“I want to thank everyone who was nominated for their ongoing dedication to creating a Canada that is accessible to people of all abilities. Anyone can create change, and it’s inspiring to see positive stories of difference makers doing just that across Canada – especially given the challenging times educators and youth faced over the past year due to the pandemic.”



Winners of the RHFSP 2021 Difference Maker of the Year Awards

Students:

- Red Deer, Alberta – Alexis Holmgren
- Nelson, British Columbia – Emerson Potter
- Winnipeg, Manitoba – Simon Monteith
- Harcourt, New Brunswick – Jada Joseph
- Old Perlican, Newfoundland and Labrador – Alyssa Barrett
- Truro, Nova Scotia – Noah Eldershaw
- Etobicoke, Ontario – Siena Padulo
- Mirabel, Quebec – Jessica Dinelle

Educators and/or community leaders:

- City of Lacombe, Alberta – Jason Lunn, community leader
- Westbank, British Columbia – Michael Smith, youth leader / coach
- Winnipeg, Manitoba – Jarrett Yaworski, youth leader / coach
- Penobsquis, New Brunswick – Beverly Foote, educator
- Old Perlican, Newfoundland and Labrador – Melissa Sommerton, educator
- Halifax, Nova Scotia – Christi Budd, educator
- Iqaluit, Nunavut – Noah Noah, community leader
- Toronto, Ontario – Stacie Carroll, educator
- Grand River, Prince Edward Island – Heather Blouin, volunteer
- Saint-Constant, Quebec – Francine Cabana, guide-reader
- Regina, Saskatchewan – Leanne Sudom, School and Life Inclusion Leader & Speech Language Pathologist

For more on the RHFSP Difference Makers of the Year award, please visit this website: www.rickhansen.com/schools-communities/difference-maker-awards

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About the Rick Hansen Foundation

The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) was established in 1988, following the completion of Rick Hansen's Man In Motion World Tour. For nearly 30 years, RHF has worked to raise awareness, change attitudes, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. The RHF School Program strives to empower the next generation of accessibility and inclusion champions through no charge resources in both English and French for students from Kindergarten to grade twelve. The program also provides powerful in-person and virtual presentations to schools and classrooms from Ambassadors with varying disabilities. Visit website: www.rickhansen.com/schools to learn more.