



Lois Hole Memorial Literacy Awards 2018

Family Learner Award Winner



Mandarae Nolan and her daughter Danirae (Dani) have faithfully attended the Centre's Rhymes that Bind program since her first time nearly two years ago. The program facilitator stated, "Mandarae is committed to Dani's learning, and devoted to her social, emotional and intellectual development." The facilitator also feels that

Mandarae has blossomed in her own way, "she is more confident as a parent, asks questions about child development and parenting, and even offers tips to other parents in the program from her own experiences."

This family has faced a number of challenges this past year, yet they arrive at the weekly program smiling and ready to participate. It is obvious to the facilitator that Mandarae and Dani practise the songs, rhymes, and gestures together at home. Mandarae is often heard telling Dani, "that is a good song we can use ...".

Dani has great vocabulary and social skills which is a credit to Mandarae. She is an excellent mother who has developed a strong healthy bond with her daughter through a lot of communication and love, along with strong guidance and support. Literacy develops in families first, and Mandarae is providing her daughter with the early language skills that are foundational to Dani's learning and future success.

Adult Learner Award Winner



Ruth Nunifu, originally from Ghana, has lived in Canada for 17 years. Ruth was born and raised – surrounded by poverty – in a community where education for girls was secondary and early marriage was prioritized. So, although endowed with a sharp intellect, she was forced to drop out of school early on so that her brothers could

continue. Years later, hardly literate, Ruth emigrated to Canada with her husband and three small children.

Ruth has not had an easy life and has worked very hard for the well-being of her children. The fact that she could not read and write was a well-kept secret. When she first came to the Centre she described her reading and writing skills as "level zero". At this time, Ruth was very unsure of herself and her abilities, and was nervous about asking for help.

Ruth has worked relentlessly in the past year and a half. She makes time to come to her tutoring sessions and to practice on her own, working around her full-time job and the care of her children. Often, she gets home from work after midnight and still finds the energy to practice her reading.

As a result of her continued hard work, Ruth has reached some major milestones. In November 2016, she finished reading her first book

and now confidently reads independently. She loves to text her family and friends, sending them notes of encouragement and support.

Ruth says her supervisor at work is very impressed with her improved oral communication, and she is now able to follow safety instructions. Her improved computer literacy skills allow her to fill out relevant forms on her own, as required by the Human Resource Manager.

Ruth no longer feels anxious when she is shopping, because she can easily read all the labels. She flew on an airplane by herself for the first time. Ruth uses the confidence she has gained from learning to read in all aspects of her life, drawing on this new strength to overcome hardship and enter a new phase in her life. She says that she is proud of herself, and can now walk with her shoulders up and without fear.

Community Leadership Award Winner



Members of the **Golden Key International Honour Society, MacEwan University Chapter** approached the Centre for Family Literacy in the fall of 2012. They were interested in exploring opportunities for their members to volunteer with the Centre.

The Golden Key International Honour Society is a student organization which focuses on three pillars: Academics, Leadership, and Service. Supporting literacy and literacy initiatives are common exercises for Golden Key chapters, as all three pillars are incorporated in such endeavors. For example, assisting someone to learn to read involves learning (academics) both for the teacher and for the learner, taking initiative and developing good relationships with learners (leadership) and of course service.

It was decided that the perfect fit would be to work with the Centre to create a celebration for National Family Literacy Day (January 27). The students and staff began to work on creating a family-centered event that would raise awareness about family literacy. A carnival theme was approved and students started to develop activities for different stations reflecting various faculties at MacEwan University.

On Sunday, January 27, 2013, the first Family Literacy Carnival was launched. The students from the Golden Key International Honour Society demonstrated great leadership, creativity, and ingenuity in coordinating the event and developing the activities that engaged the families who came out to the Carnival. As a reporter from the Edmonton Journal wrote, "Some might wonder what hissing cockroaches, bison fur or a heart-rate monitor have to do with reading. But all were tools used to bring literacy to life for kids at the Family Literacy Carnival at MacEwan University's downtown campus Sunday."

Since the first Carnival in 2013, new members of the Golden Key Society have taken up the challenge and planned and organized five successful events with the 6th one in the making. They have adapted the activities, formed partnerships, sought funding, and continued to champion the importance of family literacy through their innovation and leadership.

The Centre could not accomplish its mission and mandate without the support of community partners like MacEwan University's Golden Key International Society. Their time, energy and commitment have helped communicate the important role that families play in supporting literacy development.



Centre for

Family Literacy

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