



Creating Futures

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SSDEC Announces Excellence in Education Award Winners for 2005-06 *Recipients to be Honoured at Annual SSDEC Staff In-Service*

Fort Smith, NT – The South Slave Divisional Education Council (SSDEC) is pleased to announce the recipients of the Council's inaugural *SSDEC Excellence in Education Awards* for 2006:

Program Staff

- Jan McNeely – Special Needs Assistant, Diamond Jenness Secondary School, Hay River.
- Moh Odeen – Principal, Deninu School, Fort Resolution

Partner in Education

- Brad Mapes – Volunteer, Hay River

The purpose of the Excellence in Education Awards is to publicly recognize the sustained commitments and outstanding contributions made by staff, parents and community members in helping to create the best possible futures for South Slave students. Ann Pischinger, SSDEC Chairperson attests, "This year's group of award recipients exemplify teaching and leadership qualities that positively contribute to school improvement and student success. We are extremely proud of their individual achievements and their collective contributions."

The named award recipients were informed and honoured at the SSDEC's Annual Staff In-service in Hay River, August 30.

Backgrounder

The *SSDEC Excellence in Education Award* is awarded annually to a recipient(s) selected from the following two categories:

- *Program staff* – includes teachers, administrators, consultants and education assistants serving South Slave schools
- *Partners in Education* – includes support staff (eg. secretaries and custodians) parents, students, volunteers and other community members/groups that work in support of student learning

2005-06 SSDEC Excellence in Education Awards Recipient Biographies attached

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SOUTH SLAVE DIVISIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL
2005-06 Excellence in Education Award Recipient Biographies

Jan McNeely – Hay River

Ms. Jan McNeely is a special needs assistant at Diamond Jenness Secondary School in Hay River and also serves as President of the Diamond Jenness Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). Jan has been described by colleagues as the pulse, spirit and inspiration of what is great at Diamond Jenness. In her role as special needs assistant, Jan is described as a positive and diligent force in implementing differentiated instruction and Effective Behaviour Supports (EBS) in the school. As PAC president, Jan was instrumental in establishing the Diamond Jenness Breakfast Café, and is often times taking the lead in baking muffins for this program that ensures students receive a healthy breakfast to start the day.

Moh Odeen – Fort Resolution

Mr. Moh Odeen is principal at Deninu School in Fort Resolution, a position he has held for the past four years. According to his colleagues and staff, Moh has been a pivotal force in establishing a vibrant learning community at Deninu School that includes students, staff and parents. During his tenure at Deninu School, Moh has positively impacted student success and development in many ways, including: coordinating the development of a school-community library, celebrating student achievement through high school graduation ceremonies, and through the implementation of research projects in Language Arts and Math. Moh's intuitive leadership style is one that is based on sensitivity to the goals and needs of the community while complimented by his open-mindedness and enthusiasm for students reaching their potential.

Brad Mapes – Hay River

Mr. Brad Mapes is a local business owner, financial contributor and exceptional volunteer at all three Hay River schools. His specific contributions in just the past year are too numerous to mention. Highlights of support Mr. Mapes has provided to Hay River and other schools over the past year include:

- Read with students at Harry Camsell School
- Organized and delivered a Stamp Club Exploratory at Princess Alexandra School
- Helped coach a basketball team at Diamond Jenness Secondary School
- Tutored students at night at the library
- Purchased sports equipment, uniforms, a class set of violins, and Christmas carpets for schools

Brad was also the architect and organizer of the New Orleans Book Drive that collected books from schools and community members from across the NWT, for delivery to children, families and schools devastated by Hurricane Katrina. He and a friend took turns driving 60 hours straight to deliver thousands of donated books directly to needy children. Brad hasn't stopped there. He is now also leading a community-driven initiative that is endeavoring to raise funds for a trades training facility in Hay River. Brad's quiet and persistent commitment to the education of children may be invisible to many, but it is certainly worthy of note, making a difference, and appreciated by those who know of his efforts.