



Creating Futures

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News Release

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Winners of 2008 SSDEC Excellence in Education Awards Recognized *Recipients Announced at Annual SSDEC Staff In-Service*

Fort Smith, NT – The South Slave Divisional Education Council (SSDEC) is pleased to announce the recipients of the *SSDEC Excellence in Education Awards* for 2008:

Program Staff (Posthumous presentation)

- Lawrie Hobart – former Supervisor of Schools, SSDEC Regional Office

Partner in Education

- Fort Smith Interagency Group – Phoenix School Program

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.

The Fort Smith Interagency Group, which was recognized for the creation of the Phoenix School Program in Fort Smith, received the award at the SSDEC's recent staff in-service in Hay River. Also honoured was former SSDEC Supervisor of Schools Lawrie Hobart, who passed away unexpectedly in December 2007.

Ann Pischinger, SSDEC Chairperson asserts, "This year's award recipients exemplify educational leadership qualities that positively contribute to school improvement and student success. We are extremely proud of both their individual achievements and their collective contributions. Although we are recognizing Lawrie Hobart's contributions posthumously, his contributions will live on in the many students and staff whose lives he touched over 25 plus years as an educator in the South Slave."

Backgrounder

The *SSDEC Excellence in Education Award* is awarded annually to a recipient(s) nominated by their peers and 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

2007-08 SSDEC Excellence in Education Awards Recipient Biographies attached

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SOUTH SLAVE DIVISIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL
2008 Excellence in Education Award Recipient Biographies

Fort Smith Interagency Group – Fort Smith

The Fort Smith Interagency Group is being recognized for its vision, initiative and contributions in the creation of the Phoenix School Program as an extension to the high school programming offered at PW Kaeser High School in Fort Smith. The concept of the alternate school program came about in response to school and community concerns regarding absenteeism, drop outs, drug use, vandalism, and the need for alternative education programming and timetabling options for some youth and young adults. In order to start the Phoenix School Program, partner organizations generously provided in-kind grants and donations to assist with the school's operation, and helped promote the program within the community. By setting up the program, the Interagency Group created new opportunities for students to succeed in a non-traditional setting. Incorporating best practices employed elsewhere, the committee created a school setting which attracted more than double the expected number of participants. Initially geared for 10-12 students, it quickly expanded to accommodate 30 students, the majority of whom were not enrolled in school the year prior. The success of the program can be further measured by the fact that it produced six high school graduates at the end of the first year of operation. As well as achieving academic success, many students are developing social, emotional and other developmental and life skills. The program seems to have had a positive effect on the rest of the school as well. Since the inception of the Phoenix School Program, RCMP visits to PW Kaeser School re: incidents of open drug use, public mischief and fighting are reported to have gone from nearly regular occurrences to only two calls in the first nine months of the year.

Lawrie Hobart – SSDEC Regional Office

Mr. Lawrie Hobart is being recognized posthumously for his unwavering commitment and outstanding contributions to education in the South Slave region and in the Northwest Territories during his lifetime. Throughout his 25 plus years in Fort Smith, Lawrie was an outstanding citizen, role model, mentor, coach and educational leader. As a teacher, and as coordinator of the *Western Arctic Leadership Program*, he was attentive, genuine and gifted. He led by example and expected the best out of both his students and his colleagues. His energy and enthusiasm was infectious, motivating those around him to strive for excellence and achieve their highest potential. His sense of humour was incredible and, although described at times as 'a bit warped', was appreciated by everyone who knew him. Many former students remember him as their favourite teacher, as the teacher who cared whether they succeeded and as the teacher who pushed them to be their best. Not surprisingly, Lawrie's career took him into administration, working first as a vice principal and then principal at PWK High School, then regional coordinator and supervisor of schools before his unexpected passing in December 2007. Teachers, board office staff and the many education and community partners with whom he worked have benefitted from his knowledge and unobtrusive leadership style. Lawrie was always generous with his time at work, volunteering and coaching at PWK, chairing and serving on numerous community agencies and groups, and volunteering with the Army Cadets and Rangers program, to name a few. Indicative of his dedication and capabilities, Lawrie was instrumental in the creation of the *SSDEC Trades Awareness Program*, for which he received the GNWT's highest award for an employee, the *2006 Premier's Award of Excellence*. That valuable partnership and program continues to allow students from all South Slave high schools to be exposed to College life and a variety of trades careers as part of their high school experience.