



# LOLA 2018

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# Welcome to the 19th Annual LOLA Celebration!

Leslie Horton - Master of Ceremony  
Nancy Purdy - Executive Director  
Stephen Faul - Keynote speaker

## Award Presentations

**Learning Communities** - Successful Young Parents (Families Matter)  
**Learning Communities** - Digital Literacy in the Community (Calgary Public Library)  
**Thanks A Bunch** - NGX Intercontinental Exchange (ICE)  
**Learning Champion** - Evelyn Tait  
**Adult Learner** - Rosemary (Rose) Lowis



Stephen Faul is President and CEO of Frontier College, Canada's original national literacy organization. Previously, Stephen worked as Vice President of Imagine Canada where he spearheaded a campaign to create a new conversation with Canadians about the value and contribution of the charitable sector. He has also held senior positions at Toronto's Second Harvest, a unique fresh-food recovery organization, and Operation Eyesight, a Canadian international development charity. Stephen began his career as a broadcast journalist with stops in Oshawa, Ottawa and Toronto. In addition to studying journalism, Stephen has a Certificate in Non-Profit Marketing from Carleton University and has been a frequent speaker at York University's Non-Profit Management program.



After 20 years in broadcasting, Leslie Horton still has a huge passion for live TV and covering breaking news. She also states that a few highlights of her career, thus far, have been working on the Pan Canadian Students Choice awards program, as well as hosting the Annual Stampede Lottery Show, working on the Grandstand Show at the Calgary Stampede and emceeing the Calgary Police Chiefs awards for Chief Jack Beaton. Favorite People: My daughter, Avery – she is the light of my life! My family, who always inspire me to live well and give back.

# Successful Young Parents, Families Matter Society of Calgary - Learning Communities 2018

‘Empower. Educate. Support. Advocate.’ This is the Successful Young Parents (SYP) motto and facilitators Lisa Barton, Michael Bautista and Nushin Farsian take it to heart.

SYP is a year-long continuous program that weaves parenting education, date night, home visitation, special events and complimentary childcare to support young parents. These 16 – 24 year olds are often:

- financially challenged
- undereducated (two fathers have now completed high school)
- experiencing trauma, social isolation, and lack of family support
- experiencing and/or exiting homelessness
- having addiction issues (16 have begun and maintained sobriety)
- limited in knowledge of ages/stages of child development

Parents involved in the SYP program say it has helped them understand what their children need from them, boosted their confidence as parents, inspired them to not repeat negative childhood patterns and provided a listening ear. Parents feel supported and motivated by SYP. One young mom learned, “when you get knocked down, you don’t have to stay down.”

Nushin, Michael and Lisa provide a supportive environment that draws on a trauma-informed care model and ‘Circle of Security’ research-based curriculum. Facilitators teach and model how the quality of the parent/child attachment plays a significant role in a child’s future. Healthy relationships, social connections and reflection skills are built to help parents respond to their children’s needs.

The unique curriculum incorporates learner-led participation that values lived experience and can be adjusted based on the needs and abilities of participants. Parents learn budgeting, family literacy activities, healthy self-esteem, advocacy, conflict resolution, family of origin influences, healthy masculinity and more, in an environment of mutual trust and healthy communication. Parents report they’ve learned to communicate on a deeper level with their partners and built relationships with other families. “I learned I wasn’t alone,” says one mom. “SYP has shown me how to be a better person,” says another.



## Digital Literacy in the Community (DLIC), Calgary Public Library - Learning Communities 2018

Digital Literacy in the Community (DLIC) is an innovative and unique partnership between the Calgary Public Library and 41 partner agencies. Based on research about why low-income Calgarians do not access free in-library technology programs, the Library decided to take the resources into the community. Since 2010, the program has offered 1,900 classes and served over 11,000 learners from agencies such as The Alex, Calgary Housing, the Remand Centre, senior groups and multicultural agencies.

DLIC is a flexible outreach program consisting of curricula, instructors, mobile computer labs and Internet access. The mobile lab can be set up in a classroom, office or open space, and the curriculum can be adapted to the needs of partner agencies and clients. Learning activities are offered in plain language and are based on exploring free sites, free tools, free web-based platforms and applications. Fifteen different modules, which can be divided into smaller sections, include basic computer skills, using the Internet, social media, Microsoft Office online and exploring free resources online.

Small classes, offered within an agency that participants are already familiar with, provide individualized learning and help learners feel comfortable and safe. Many agencies report that their clients “feel intimidated going somewhere to take a class.” In addition to learning a new skill, agencies report, “the wealth of information at [clients’] fingertips ... is intellectually stimulating and personally gratifying. It serves to maintain their emotional stability and sense of self-worth tremendously.” This is especially helpful for clients with mental health issues.

An important outcome of the program is that barriered Calgarians build not only their digital literacy skills, but also their social connections and self-esteem as well. DLIC training provides foundational skills that can motivate participants to return to the workforce or school; it can also enable participants to get in touch with family half way around the world.



# NGX Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) - Thanks A Bunch 2018

NGX Intercontinental Exchange has been one of the most steadfast and reliable supporters of the Catholic Family Service's Never Too Late (NTL) program over the last four years.

Never Too Late is a free GED prep program that also provides social emotional support for multi-barriered adult learners. Many of these learners have experienced complex trauma and psychosocial stressors that have led to feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness and lack of confidence. Partners such as NGX help challenge learners' long-held and often very entrenched negative self-beliefs.

NGX provides all students with a new backpack full of stationery and learning supplies. This tangible gift provides a continuous reminder that there is a community of people who believe in them and contributes to the students' resilience in persevering throughout the 4 1/2 month program. A recent graduate commented in tears that he was "in disbelief that somebody cared enough about him to give him such a gift."

When the NTL program expanded to a second quadrant of the city, in true NGX style they didn't hesitate to provide additional support. Not only did they provide more backpacks and supplies, they also sponsored a recent graduation ceremony, catering the event and volunteering with set up and clean up. They have already expressed a desire to continue their graduation sponsorship in coming years.

The students and families positively impacted by NGX's support of the Never Too Late program are beyond count. Catholic Family Service considers them "a significant part of the [NTL] program's infrastructure and fond members of our NTL family," and says it is "a tremendous reassurance to know that we can always count on them." NGX has played a pivotal role in assisting the NTL team to provide the foundational skills necessary for participants to live their lives to the fullest and realize their dreams.



## Evelyn Tait - Learning Champion 2018



Evelyn Tait is a pioneer in bringing literacy and essential skills to the forefront of programming in Alberta. She recently retired from the Government of Alberta (GoA), Community and Business Services department. Although there was no official 'literacy and essential skills department' there, people used to say Evelyn was the head of it.

Co-workers also describe Evelyn as an innovative funder. While at the GoA, she researched, advocated for and wrote the first request for proposals for her unit that embedded literacy and essential skills into pre-employment skills training curriculum for high-barrier clients. This RFP was also unique in that she mandated that Literacy Alberta would collaborate in the project. Evelyn also spearheaded an innovative initiative to promote literacy and essential skills training to Alberta Works service providers, where hundreds of people gained an understanding of the importance of these skills. Her colleagues feel that the workshops were of great value and undoubtedly raised the quality of programming for clients.

Although she is now retired, she continues to involve herself in community-based projects that support essential skills development in learners and adults who face barriers to employment. An example of this is Evelyn's involvement with the Calgary John Howard Society through the Integrating Foundational Learning project. She truly believes in the power of learning to change lives.

Her passion for and persistence about the importance of literacy and essential skills has been so infectious that her co-workers would often say, "I'm starting to drink the Kool-Aid." Sure enough, others from her department admit to taking up the torch.

Although Evelyn constantly has a bright smile on her face, she means business when she is passionate about an issue, and luckily for us that issue is literacy. Luckily for us also, is that she has always done it with kindness and patience.

## Rosemary (Rose) Lowis - Adult Learner 2018

The words that keep appearing over and over again in Rose's nomination and letters of support are 'assists', 'helps', 'supports' and 'mentors'.

Rose Lowis is a learner in the Bow Valley College Lifeline to Literacy adult literacy program at The Alex Community Centre. She has faced a lifetime of challenges that include being a casualty of the '60s scoop, considerable medical problems, homelessness and a possible undiagnosed learning disability. Despite the challenges, Rose has remained positive and compassionate and able to accept everyone for who they are. She has an open approach with others and provides valuable feedback in class. Not only does she help others in class, she has also taken time out of her busy schedule to mentor two social work students about transitioning from homelessness back into community.



People describe Rose as a natural leader with a great spirit. "When Rose speaks, others listen." Another describes Rose as a "true warrior in life," with a love of learning.

She has committed to learning something new every day, even if that new thing scares her (of her transition to permanent housing Rose wrote, "The streets were all I knew. Doing something that I didn't know scared me to death"). In addition to improving her literacy skills, Rose has taught herself to fish (which she is passionate about) and taken up crossfit training.

A student and practitioner of real life literacy, she helps others with 'critical literacy' advice on how to obtain personal ID, bus passes and income tax, as well as preparing her own portfolio of updated medical information to take to medical appointments.

Two much-loved rescue cats – Max and Zinnia – call Rose mom.

Rose hopes to continue to help and support others by volunteering with people with developmental disabilities or at the Mustard Seed.



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