

## **2015 JOHN G WRIGHT DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD – Donna DesRoches**

This year's recipient of the John G. Wright Distinguished Service Award is someone who has left her mark not only in her school division, but across the province. The nomination of Donna DesRoches was supplied by James Shevchuk, Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction for the Living Sky School Division. I would like to share some of his words.

Donna brings to our schools a passion for Libraries and Literacy that is unmatched. This highly cherished team member is extremely valuable! She is a strong educator with excellent skills in collaboration and inquiry. As a colleague, I am honored to have worked with someone of such high integrity and professionalism. I commend Donna for her genuine efforts to enhance every student's library experience. Her "above and beyond" work ethic is appreciated by staff and students.

Leading learning, setting vision and strengthening our educational community is where Donna shines. Her persistent advocacy for libraries to be current, relevant and places of wonder is consuming. A long time goal of Donna's was recently achieved. A five year plan to "up date" existing collections across our division was realized. She saw potential and turned it into reality. The planning and preparation was a multi-year strategy that took a great deal of fortitude. Even in these difficult times with budgets, Donna managed to come up with a solution to help and enhance all 30 libraries throughout our division. It truly was an ambitious plan and she has succeeded in making every school library stronger in Living Sky; and every child's experience richer. It really is an enhancement that will have an influence on staff and students for many years. Her tenacity to ensure all students are kept current with digital materials, databases and online resources is fantastic. Owing to the specialized knowledge that can be shared, many of our rural students can now benefit from library services at school and from home. There is a real leveling of "the playing field" for these children.

Preparing students for the "cyber reality" is another passion of this dynamo. Donna makes sure that staff and students understand the relevance of professional learning networks, encouraging the information to come to them through various digital forms and being aware of the next "big thing" that is out there. She understands the significance of making the world come alive and return back to the classroom. In her many collaborative professional development sessions, this leader has shared so much with the teachers and staff of our division. They now speak of Yammer accounts, on-line resources and SAMR models as parts of important elements in their instructional regimen. The efforts she models are infectious and as a result, she has created a cadre of followers who carry her great ideas out to our schools. Her advocacy for libraries and literacy consistently over the years has made us a better school division.

Donna's contributions extend provincially and nationally as well. Donna served on the executive of the Saskatchewan School Library Association early in her career from 1988 – 1994, serving as President from 1992 – 1993. Her leadership was needed again as she was summoned back to the Presidency of SSLA for two terms from 2008-2010. Prior to that period Donna was appointed to the reference committee for the Connections document, the Ministry of Education's policy and guidelines for school libraries in Saskatchewan published in 2008.

Ever the collaborator, Donna teamed up with Carlene Walter. Together the pair collectively known as the *Disruptive Innovators*, received national recognition for their provision of professional development being the 2008 recipients of the Canadian Library Association's Angela Thacker Memorial Award for their contributions to the field of teacher-librarianship. Donna and Carlene developed a series of podcasts for the 'Your School Library' online conference, presented at the K12 online conference, and facilitated *Meet The Stars*, a professional development opportunity for teacher-librarians. Soon other provinces were seeking them out. Donna and Carlene presented the keynote for *Kelowna Fresh: The 2010 BCTLA Provincial Conference*.

In closing, I will return to the words of Mr. Shevchuk. Ms DesRoches has a lively intellectual curiosity which she applies in innovative approaches to her work and her teaching. The passion that Donna brings to all projects would be welcomed in any environment.

I know that the entire Living Sky School Division is behind this nomination. Please join me in congratulating Ms Donna DesRoches.