

Bill McFarland Award

Below is the text of remarks made by outgoing president, Sylvia Tremblay.

The BC Parents in Crisis Society created the Bill McFarland award to recognize exceptional efforts and lasting contributions in the area of child abuse.

Bill McFarland was a man with vision. Bill could see beyond the daily child welfare issues and work in which he was involved. He could see the implications and impact of policy decisions and practice on the children of the future. He could see beyond the present and into the years to come.

And while seeing into the future is a wonderful gift, it is only of value if something is done, if action is taken to respond to what one sees in the future. Bill understood that not enough was being done to protect and care for too many of our children. Bill understood that he, not someone else, had to do something.

So, he made use of his gift for seeing into the future by advocating for children throughout his life and his social work career. He undertook a range of activities that would result in the birth of child caring organizations and associations that would last his lifetime and beyond.

He founded the *Alberta Foster Parents Association*, the *National Federation of Youth in Care networks*, and *The BC Parents in Crisis Society*. We are one of his dreams, and now over three hundred volunteers and half a million dollars support support the work that he began.

His efforts and energy will ripple through generations of children to come. They won't necessarily know who is responsible for the changes in their lives, but you and I will know that it was Bill's initiative that is responsible for the impact on their lives.

This year the Bill McFarland award is being given to another who has made exceptional efforts and a lasting impact that will continue to ripple into the future. This year the award goes to our own

Dolores Romano. She has been directly responsible for making the lives of hundreds of parents and children better.

Dolores has, for the past twenty-one years, been a PIC facilitator. If Dolores simply ran the group for two hours a week, that in itself would make her worthy of this award. After all, 21 years times roughly 50 weeks a year (lets say that she took



Carol McFarland

Dolores Romano.

Barry Corrin Ex.Dir.

Sylvia Tremblay President

some time off or got sick now and then) is still over 1050 sessions. If she showed up on time and went home after two hours, she put in about 2100 hours, and if you divide that by a regular work week of 35

hours, she put in 14 months of work. And that isn't counting the countless number of calls and support that Dolores provided over the phone.

But that's not how Dolores did the job. For the last 21 years, Dolores would pick people up on her way to the group and drop them off afterwards. She would "tune into people" and visit them when they needed someone to lean on. If a parent was going to court and needed support, Dolores could be counted on to be by their side. If a parent needed an advocate, Dolores would take the time to go with them and advocate on their behalf. And that's only some of the "extra miles" that Dolores went.

On group nights, Dolores would leave home at about 6:00 pm and return about 10:00 pm. and then she would put in approximately two additional hours throughout the rest of the week. Conservatively speaking it is not a stretch to say that Dolores has contributed over three and a half solid years of her life to BC PIC and that is conservative.

As I said, the time alone would make Dolores a worthy recipient of the Bill McFarland award, but it's not just the commitment of time.

It's the quality of that commitment.

Dolores tells the story of a woman whose husband had locked her out and how she went with her to help her return to the house. It was potentially, and as it turned out, quite a dangerous situation. Nevertheless, Dolores knew the woman needed help and with unqualified caring and support, went with her.

And then there are the less frightening, but no less important acts of caring, like taking a parent to a pancake breakfast or making sure that people's birthdays are remembered with a phone call or card. Is it any wonder that the parents in her group have such great affection and love for her? Is it any wonder that those who leave town always get in touch with Dolores when they return to Vancouver?

And if all that isn't enough, just for good measure Dolores decided to take on a leadership role with BC PIC Society and joined the Board of Directors. She now contributes to the growth of our organization by working tirelessly on committees and providing the Board of Directors with the wisdom that comes from her 21 years of intimate involvement.

And Dolores does it all so "matter of factly". She does it with the greatest humility and understatement, which makes it all the more joyful to present this award to Dolores Romano.

Over the years Dolores, you have easily impacted the lives of hundreds of parents and probably three to four hundred children. I'd say all of the above puts Dolores in the category of "exceptional efforts" and "lasting contributions".

Dolores, I haven't even touched on your volunteer work outside of the BC PIC. Your work with learning disabled children, or the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board, or your work with ESL students. Nor have I mentioned the fact that you play and co-ordinate bridge for the elderly.

Dolores, it is our pleasure to award you the Bill McFarland award for your significant contributions to the prevention of child abuse and for your contributions to the BC Parents in Crisis Society. I would like to invite Carol McFarland to present the award.

Thank you Dolores.