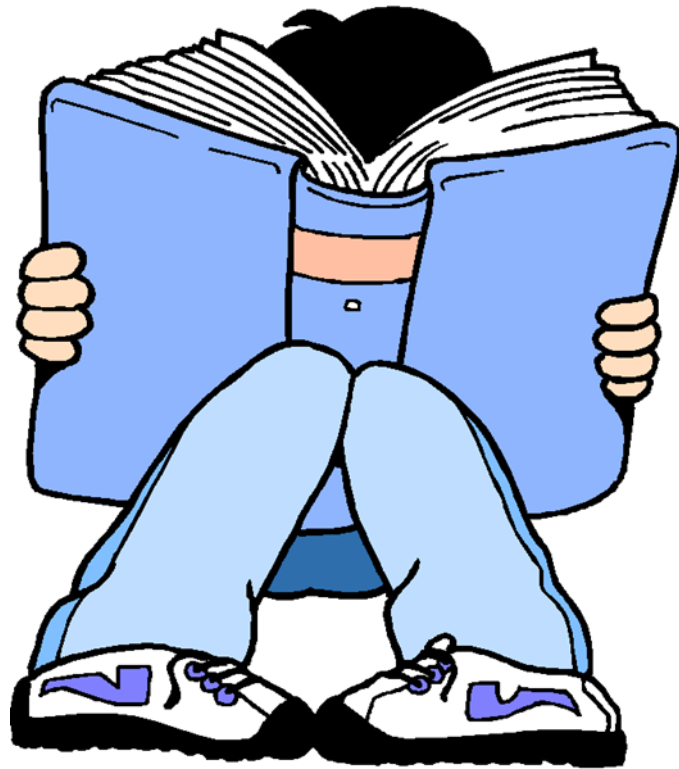


**SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG READERS'  
CHOICE AWARDS**



**THE WILLOW AWARDS  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2016-2017**

**Get lost in a good book:**



**a Willow book, of course!**

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## BOARD MEMBERS 2016 – 2017

**Co- President: Cassandra Mireau, Saskatoon**

**Co-President Amy Korver, Saskatoon**

**Vice-President: Erin Walton, Regina**

**Vice-President – Communication: Elann McChesney, Regina**

**Treasurer: Yvonne Denomy, Saskatoon**

**Secretary: Melody Wood, Yorkton**

**Fundraising Officer: Cynthia Bretell, Saskatoon**

**Directors at Large:**

**Donna Lindstrom, Regina**

**Leanne Forrest, Regina**

**Rhonda Wills, Regina**

**Hali Hamel, Saskatoon**

**Danielle Bergen, Waldheim,**

**Director SLA Rep: Cynthia Bretell, Saskatoon**

**Director SRC Rep: Pam Foy, Moosomin**



*Honouring retiring board members  
of long standing, Ruth Garnett and Ann Atchison.*

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of SYRCA –Saskatchewan Young Readers’ Choice –The Willow Awards, Inc. is to promote reading by granting a Willow Award to the Canadian and/or Saskatchewan book(s) voted by students to be the best of those nominated in designated categories for a specific year.

## OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve its Mission, the Corporation will:

- develop an annual list of Canadian books nominated to receive a Willow Award;
- maintain a website to inform the public of the list of nominated books, and to conduct the voting electronically;
- present Willow Award(s) to the author(s) of the winning book(s);
- promote reading of Canadian books by conducting the award and by developing incentives for young readers to participate;
- develop and ensure implementation of SYRCA – Saskatchewan Young Readers’ Choice – The Willow Awards, Inc. policies;
- encourage community involvement in all levels of SYRCA- Saskatchewan Young Readers’ Choice – The Willow Awards, Inc. activity;
- cooperate with other organizations and groups in order to maximize the use of limited resources;
- ensure that SYRCA – Saskatchewan Young Readers’ Choice – The Willow Awards, Inc. is managed in a financially responsible, prudent and ethical manner.

## SYRCA – THE WILLOW AWARDS STRATEGIC PLAN

Effective strategic planning requires us to focus on a few key priorities, while at the same time continuing to attend to all the important areas that relate to our mandate as outlined in our mission statement. A priority is often carried out over more than one year.

<b>Organizational Structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Task &amp; Responsibilities</li><li>• Board Meetings</li></ul> <b>Fiscal Responsibility</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Budget</li><li>• Fund Development</li></ul> <b>Communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Website</li><li>• Posters, Bookmarks</li><li>• Internal Communications</li><li>• External Communications</li><li>• Conferences</li></ul>	<b>Sustainability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Membership</li><li>• Board Memberships, Human Resources, Volunteers</li><li>• Executive Director ---paid position</li></ul> <b>Programs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book Selection</li><li>• Gala – winning authors’ attendance, reading at host schools</li><li>• Launch</li><li>• Educational Activities</li></ul>
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## REPORT OF THE CO-PRESIDENTS, SYRCA INC. 2016 - 2017

The SYRCA Annual Report reflects the success of the 2016 – 2017 operating year. Minutes of the 2016 – 2017 Annual General Meeting will be available at the May 27, 2017 Annual General Meeting.

This year the board had 13 positions filled including 5 new board members. This year has been challenging, interesting, and exciting. We were hit hard by the economical downfall and lost key sponsorships that forced the board to focus on and set key priority areas. We are incredibly proud of the work we have completed and the goals we have set for future years.

The primary focus of this year has been the development of a new webpage. The board spent a lot of time ensuring that the website was fresh, modern, and compatible with a variety of devices. We are excited to unveil it this spring and will continue to use the website as our online hub to provide timely announcements, a place to submit and collect votes, and a spot for teachers and librarians to access key documents and forms. We continue to use other forms of social media (Twitter and Facebook) to connect us to teachers, librarians, and to the general public.

The Willow Awards can only continue with the generous support of patrons, sponsors, donors, friends, and members. We would like to thank all of you for your commitment to promoting quality Canadian children's literature for the children of Saskatchewan. It is because of this generous financial support that we are able to maintain key programming to promote and advertise the Willow Awards.

As a provincial board, we have members from across Saskatchewan and we facilitate the geographic distance by inviting members to meet via Skype and conference calls. The board met face to face 4 times this year and communicates regularly via email to stay in touch.

We would also like to thank our volunteer board members who are hardworking, creative, and enthusiastic. They have donated countless hours over the year to ensure the success of our organization and to fulfill the SYRCA mandate.

Lastly, we would like to thank the Board for their support and encouragement as we filled the role of co-president over the past two years.

Respectfully submitted,

**Amy Korver and Cassandra Mireau**

## FUNDRAISING REPORT 2016 – 2017

As the new fundraising director for 2016-2017, I began during a time when the economy in the province was not doing well. We struggled to find donors for a gala that was so well sponsored in previous years.

There were 34 requests sent out in the months of October and November. The names for the request were from previous years and a few new ones were added in as well. At a presentation to the Regina Teacher-Librarians, we gained an additional sponsor.

Of the 34 requests that were sent out, we received 6 donations, for a total of \$6,975.00, which is far below the target of \$ 20,000.00.

It was a tough year for the committee and some decisions will need to be made going forward.

The Saskatchewan Young Readers Choice Awards gratefully acknowledges our patrons, sponsors and friends for their financial support.

Respectfully submitted by  
**Cindy Bretell**  
**Fundraising Director**

# STICKER REPORT FOR 2016 – 2017

Stickers are circles that are one inch in diameter with the Willow logo imprint. They are available on a white background for finalist books and on a gold background for the winners. They can be ordered by downloading a copy of the order form from our website. Willow sticker sales are down 25% from last year and over 50% from 5 years ago.

Respectfully submitted by

**Pam Foy,**  
Sticker Chair

**Fiscal Year April 1, 2016 - March 31, 2017**

Date	Invoice/Receipt	Amount	Paid	Difference/Outstanding
22-Apr	2016-01	\$12.00	\$12.00	
28-Apr	2016-02	\$12.00	\$12.00	
3-May	2016-03	\$12.00	\$12.00	
10-May	2016-04	\$12.00	\$12.00	
10-May	2016-05	\$17.00	\$17.00	
26-May	2016-06	\$60.00	\$60.00	
2-Jun	2016-07	\$36.00	\$36.00	
4-Aug	2016-08	\$12.00	\$12.00	
5-Sep	2016-09	\$24.00	\$24.00	
12-Sep	2016-10	\$36.00	\$36.00	
27-Sep	2016-11	\$12.00	\$12.00	
28-Sep	2016-12	\$24.00	\$24.00	
29-Sep	2016-13	\$24.00	\$24.00	
29-Sep	2016-14	\$10.00	\$10.00	
29-Sep	2016-15	\$24.00	\$24.00	
29-Sep	2016-16	\$12.00	\$12.00	
5-Oct	2016-17	\$12.00	\$12.00	
4-Oct	2016-18	\$8.00	\$8.00	
20-Oct	2016-19	\$12.00	\$12.00	
3-Nov	2016-20	\$5.00	\$5.00	
11-Dec	2016-21	\$12.00	\$12.00	
8-Dec	2016-22	\$12.00	\$12.00	
18-Feb	2016-23	\$24.00	\$24.00	
26-Mar	2016-25	\$120.00		\$120.00
26-Mar	2016-26	20.00		\$20.00
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
		<b>\$564.00</b>	<b>\$424.00</b>	<b>\$140.00</b>



## FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2016 – 2017

The official Financial Statement for the year ending March 31, 2017 is available upon request. If you would like to receive a copy of our statement please contact the Treasurer via email from our Contact Us form at [www.willowawards.ca](http://www.willowawards.ca).

## LAUNCHING OF THE WILLOW FINALISTS

Each year, every school in the province is encouraged to launch the new Willow Award finalists! We are very interested in sharing the great work you have done to promote this quality literature. During October and November participants can enter a competition to win a complete set of 30 finalist books by submitting a photo (photos) and/or a description of their local launch. Winners are randomly drawn. This year, twelve entries were received.

**Congratulations to the following people, who submitted their launch ideas and are recipients of book prizes:**

**Grand prize winner**, recipient of the entire set of 2016 Willow finalists (30 books): **Colony School, Sun West Colony Schools**

**Runner up winner**, recipient of a set of 2016 Shining and Diamond Willow finalists (20 books): **McVeety School, Regina**

**Runner up winner**, recipient of the set of 2016 Shining Willow finalists (10 books): **Lipton School**

**Runner up winner**, recipient of the set of 2016 Diamond Willow finalists (10 books): **Maple Creek Composite High School**

**Runner up winner**, recipient of the set of 2016 Snow Willow finalists (10 books): **Blessed Marie Rivier School, Prince Albert, and Davidson School**

**Honourable mention**: recipients will receive a box of assorted books: **Dr. Perry School, Regina, Pleasantdale School, Estevan and Rosetown Central School, Rosetown**

# LAUNCHING OF THE WILLOWS IN PICTURES

*Pleasantdale School, Estevan*  
*Dr. Perry School, Regina*  
*Rosetown High School, Rosetown*  
*Maple Creek Composite High School, Maple Creek*



## COMMUNICATION: WILLOW AWARDS WEBSITE REPORT

[www.willowawards.ca](http://www.willowawards.ca)

The website is the key communication tool with those who promote and participate in the Willow Awards. During the summer of 2016, the website was compromised and needed to be rebuilt. A decision was made to change the website developer and host from HJ Linnen to Blacksun Design, Inc. This decision was made in part due to costs and to allow for easier access for updates. We thank HJ Linnen for their support over the years and look forward to a new relationship with Blacksun.

Designs for the new website were created during the fall and winter and the transfer of the website over to Blacksun was made at the end of March when voting concluded. One of our goals was to try to create a more interactive website with an efficient archive to track past winners and finalists. We also wanted to make the website more child-friendly. Currently, there is a temporary page in place. We anticipate that the new website will be live in the first weeks of June 2017.

The voting for the Willow Awards this year tracked a total of 15,524 votes for 2016. The Shining category is still the most popular by far with 89% of the total vote, similar to last year.

Once again, the SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala was live-streamed through the website to ensure that as many fans across Saskatchewan could view this special event. This year, there were 37 views (classes or others) who joined in live during the Gala.

Respectfully Submitted

**Leanne Forest**

**Danielle Bergen**

**Rhonda Wills**

**Web Committee**



*Follow us on Facebook and Twitter @willowawards!*

## 2017 WILLOW FINALIST VOTING REPORT

The main purpose of the Willow Awards is to promote reading and great Canadian Literature among Saskatchewan children and youth. We gauge our success through the voting that occurs in the spring each year. We are thrilled to see that voting has again increased in numbers across all categories. More votes were placed this year than in the past 5 years. Reaching more children throughout the province, particularly in rural areas is of primary interest.

Votes by Category	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	CHANGE
SHINING	10,871	11,839	12,680	9,901	13,898	40.3 %
DIAMOND	1,145	1,092	866	883	1,230	39.3 %
SNOW	602	423	572	307	396	29.0 %
TOTAL VOTES	12,618	13,354	14,118	11,040	15,524	40.6 %



*The Award presented to the winning author in each category.*

## 2017 WILLOW AWARD WINNERS

### SHINING WILLOW



**Clover's Luck** (A Magical Animal Adoption Agency, #1)  
By Kallie George

### DIAMOND WILLOW



**Masterminds** by Gordon Korman

### SNOW WILLOW



**The Dogs** by Allan Stratton



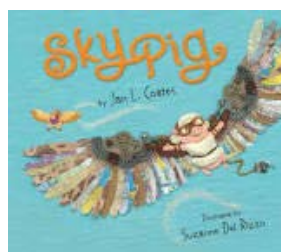
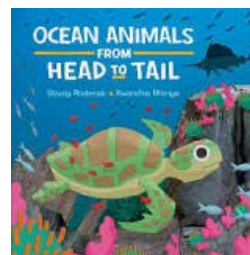
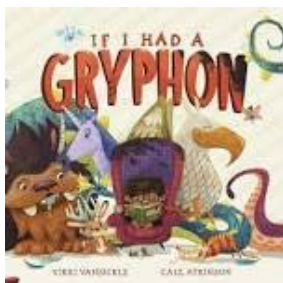
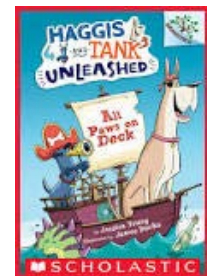
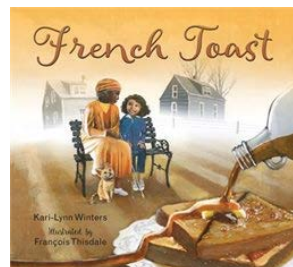
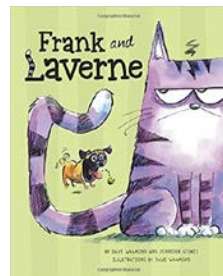
## PROGRAM: SHINING WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

We had a great group of enthusiastic readers who were board members, teachers, teacher librarians, library technicians, retired librarians and children's programmers, who read over 120 books. They included Amy Korver, Cass Mireau, Cindy Bretel, Erin Boyle, Hali Hamel, Joeline Linner, Kerri Anne Nakoneshny, Laurie Hnatiuk, Lindsay Sali, Melody Wood, Susan Voitka Seager, Coraliee Danyluk, and Wilfred Burton.

Thanks to their insights and great discussions we have a great list of finalists for the Shining Willow for 2017.

Respectfully submitted by  
**Amy Korver**  
**Cass Mireau.**  
Shining Willow Committee Co-Chairs

## THE SHINING WILLOW FINALISTS 2017



## PROGRAM: DIAMOND WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

Reading for the 2017 Diamond Willows started late in the season as many of the submissions arrived just prior to the deadline. The committee worked diligently to read through the submitted titles in this shortened time period. The committee had 97 submissions up for consideration including 5 titles rolled over from last year. Eight titles were passed on to the Snow Committee and 5 titles were moved to the Shining Committee. After the finalists were selected, 18 titles have been rolled over for consideration for the 2018 awards.

The Diamond Willow Committee was made up of 11 dedicated teachers, retired teachers, teacher librarians and public librarians who gave of their valuable time and expertise to choose the most note-worthy books as the 2017 Diamond Willow finalists. Thank you to the marvelous committee consisting of Jessica Cammer, Kendra Bender, Susan Holmes, Elann McChesney, Rhonda Wills, Donna Lindstrom, Charmaine Stouse, Heather Dolmage, Charlene Hinks and Erin Walton.

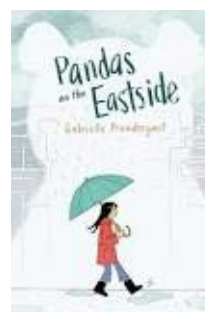
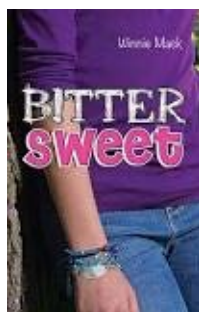
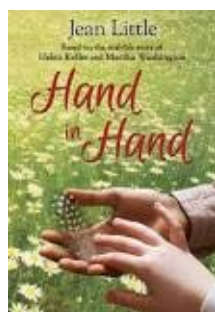
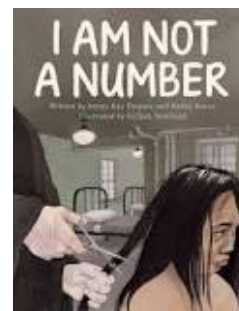
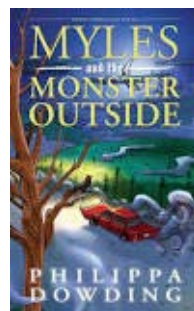
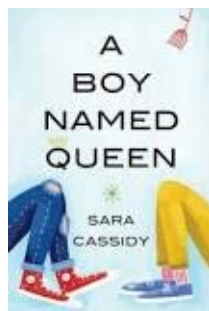
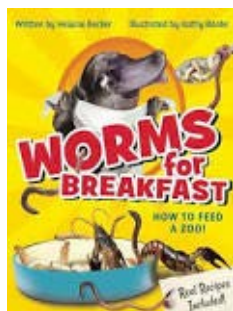
The Diamond Willow Committee is pleased to present the finalists for the 2017 Diamond Willow Award.

Respectfully submitted by

**Erin Walton**

**Diamond Willow Chair**

## THE DIAMOND WILLOW FINALISTS 2017

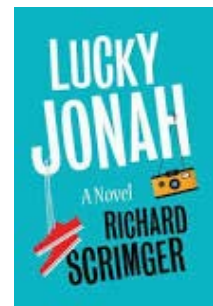
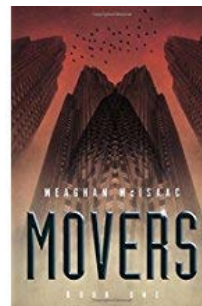
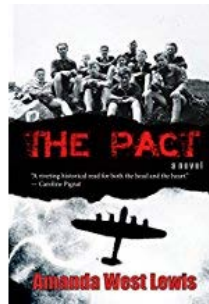
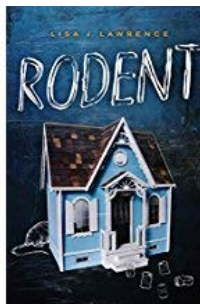
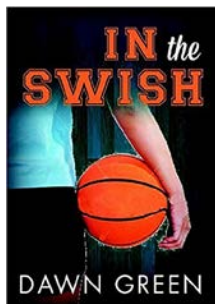
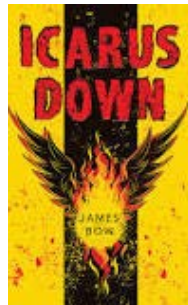


## PROGRAM: SNOW WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

We had an excellent and passionate committee for the Snow Willows this year! The readers were Kristopher Barnes, Ruth Elliott, Darrelle Downs, Cassandra Mireau, Tressa Dent, Amanda Irvine, Danielle Bergen, Justin Matheson and Yvonne Denomy. Countless hours were spent in reading and on enthusiastic discussions over the 78 titles that were considered. Thanks to the committee's hard work, we have an exciting, high-quality group of nominees for the 2017 Willow Awards!

Respectfully Submitted,  
**Danielle Bergen**  
Snow Willow Chair

## THE SNOW WILLOW FINALISTS 2017





## THE 14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SASKENERGY WILLOW AWARDS GALA

Jolie Brewer, teacher-librarian at MacNeill Elementary School in Regina, along with MacNeill's Willow Ambassadors, a club of grade 5-8 students, hosted The Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards – The Willow Awards Gala, on Friday, May 13, 2016. The event was live streamed throughout the province so all students could witness the anticipated announcement of the Willow Award winners.

The day began with wonderful author visits from Alison Lohans and Rona Arato, both finalists for the 2015 Willow Awards. The students welcomed the authors and enjoyed listening to their personal stories regarding their books.



*Alison Lohans sharing her picture book Leaving Mr. Humphries*

*Rona Arato providing autographs*

The Mistress of Ceremonies, a poised Abigail Sadowski, began the Gala at 1:15 pm. After the singing of O'Canada, the program included a variety of special guest speakers, one of which was Elder Betty McKenna. Elder Betty began her talk by sharing the history of the willow tree in First Nations' culture. Sacred stories were told in a special place and willow trees were used to create that special place. First Nations people began with 1 willow branch, then 2, then 4, until they collected 40 willow branches, to construct a sweat lodge. The sweat lodge was a place where sacred stories were first shared. Elder Betty then connected writing a story to the use of willow trees in the construction of a sweat lodge. Like a sweat lodge that starts with one willow tree, a story begins with one word. This one word grows into a sentence, then a paragraph, a chapter and finally into a special book. The significance of this connection is that without willow trees there would not have been a special place for First Nations to share their sacred stories. Elder Betty's impactful message intertwined well with the value the Willow Awards places on stories.



*Elder Betty McKenna receiving a thank you gift for speaking at the Gala*

Further highlights of the program consisted of a PowerPoint presentation featuring students' artwork of the finalist books and a song titled "Books" presented by the MacNeill School choir. Additional special guests included: Regina Councillor Barbara Young, Leslie Gosselin, from SaskEnergy, and other representatives from Regina Public Library, Affinity Credit Union, Twin Lakes Community Association and MacNeill School Community Council.

All in attendance were excited to hear the announcement of the winners. The Shining Willow Award went to Linda Bailey for *If Kids Ruled the World*. Linda Bailey was unable to attend but sent a heartfelt acceptance speech via video.

The Diamond Willow Award went to Rona Arato for **The Last Train: A Holocaust Story**. When Rona's name was announced the crowd of students roared with excitement!



*Rona Arato accepting her Diamond Willow Award.*

The Snow Willow Award went to Eric Walters for *The Rule of Three*. Eric was unavailable to attend and he also sent a video message accepting his award along with sharing a teaser about his upcoming novel.

Leslie Gosselin, along with SYRCA representatives presented the school with a willow tree, commemorative plaque and a set of 2016 Willow Finalist books as a thank you for hosting the Willow Awards Gala.



*Willow tree presentation by Leslie Gosselin, SaskEnergy representative, and Ruth Garnett, SYRCA Board Member.*

Following the Gala, the MacNeill Willow Ambassadors hosted a reception for special guests. The refreshments and appetizers took inspiration from some of the 2015 finalist books, such as a fizzy punch served upon a smoking caldron, which was inspired by *Curse of the Dream Witch*, by Allan Stratton. Swag bags were also given to those at the reception.

*MacNeill Willow Ambassadors at the Gala reception.*



It was a wonderful afternoon of celebrating children's literature. As Elder Betty emphasized in her speech, "if it wasn't for willows we wouldn't have our stories" and because of our readers, supporters and patrons, the Willow Awards had another successful year of sharing our stories.

Respectfully Submitted by  
Erin Walton & Donna Lindstrom, Gala Liaisons



*Presentation of the  
2017 nominee books to MacNeill School*



*Presentation of thank you bouquet to Jolie Brewer, teacher-librarian by  
Erin Walton and Donna Lindstrom.*

# SYRCA – THE WILLOW AWARDS

## Patrons, Sponsors, and Friends

Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards gratefully acknowledge our patrons, sponsors and friends for their financial support. The generous contributions made by those listed below have made the Willow Awards possible.

**SYRCA Gold Patrons have generously contributed \$5,000 or more:**



**SYRCA Silver Patrons have generously contributed \$3,000 to \$4,999:**



**SaskEnergy**

**SYRCA Bronze Patrons have generously contributed \$1,000 to \$2999:**



**P3A**

# SYRCA – THE WILLOW AWARDS

## Patrons, Sponsors, and Friends

**SYRCA Sponsors have generously contributed \$500 - \$999.**

**Regan Wagner, Hi-Tec Profiles, Inc.**

**ULS- United Library Services**

**SYRCA Friends have generously contributed \$100 or more:**

**Regina Chapter of the Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan**

**Saskatchewan Reading Council**

**Florence Barton**

**Melody Wood**

*“You’re never too old, too wacky, too wild,*

*To pick up a book and read to a child.”*

**Dr. Seuss**

*“Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.”*

**Emilie Buchwald**

*“Start with a Book. Read. Talk. Explore.”*

[www.readingrockets.com](http://www.readingrockets.com)

**For more information, please contact [willowawards@willowawards.ca](mailto:willowawards@willowawards.ca).**

