# SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG READERS' CHOICE AWARDS



THE WILLOW AWARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019



#### Snow Willow Finalists -









Optimists Die First













#### - Diamond Willow Finalists -





















#### Shining Willow Finalists























**GOLD PATRON** 



SILVER PATRON BRONZE PATRONS









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### **BOARD MEMBERS 2018-2019**

President: Erin Walton, Regina

Past President: Amy Korver, Saskatoon

**Vice President: Vacant** 

Vice President Communications: Elann McChesney, Regina

Treasurer: Yvonne Denomy, Saskatoon

**Secretary: Melody Wood, Yorkton** 

Officer: Fundraising: Annah Gullacher, Annaheim &

Rhonda Wills, Regina

Director: Website: Rhonda Wills, Regina

**Directors at Large:** 

Donna Lindstrom, Regina

Terry Wood, Regina

Heather Dolmage, Regina

Darrelle Downs, Saskatoon

Director: SLA Rep: Kathryn Drapak, Denare Beach

Director: SRC Rep: Pam Foy, Moosomin



#### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of SYRCA –Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice –The Willow Awards, Inc. is to promote reading and celebrate Canadian literature. Each year, Saskatchewan children and youth vote for Willow Award recipients from finalists nominated in three award categories.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

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 Saskatchewan and/or 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 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.

#### **Organizational Structure**

- Task & Responsibilities
- Board Meetings

#### **Fiscal Responsibility**

- Budget
- Fund Development

#### **Communications**

- Website
- Posters, Bookmarks
- Internal Communications
- External Communications
- Conferences

#### **Sustainability**

- Membership
- Board Memberships, Human Resources, Volunteers

#### **Programs**

- Book Selection
- Gala winning authors' attendance, reading at host schools
- Launch
- Educational Activities

#### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards (SYRCA), The Willow Awards Inc., Board of Directors met four times during the 2018-2019 year.

A valued member of the board stepped down at the end of 2017-2018 year; Hali Hamel, our social media coordinator. Three new board members, Heather Dolmage, from Regina and Darrelle Downs and Annah Gullacher from Saskatoon were recruited for this year, creating a board of thirteen members.

As a non-profit, volunteer run organization, fundraising is the key to keeping the Willow Awards operational. This year we met our budget needs. However, each year, there is a concern if our financial goals will be met. The Board is committed to local fundraising, like the steak night held in Regina and the Book Grab event held in Saskatoon. Our primary sources of funding come from the generous patrons, sponsors, friends, and donors. The board would like to sincerely thank our new and faithful contributors for your recognition of the importance of and support for literacy.

The Willow Awards website, Twitter and Facebook accounts are our main online communication and promotional tools. Through yearly mailouts, we distribute our posters and bookmarks to all schools and libraries across the province, showcasing the newest finalists. We were able to promote the Willow Awards at the Word on the Street festival in Saskatoon, to developing teachers at the University of Regina, and at library and teacher meetings in our North.

Last year, voting was down, so it was encouraging to see the overall voting increase this year, especially in the Diamond and Snow categories. We continue to include book activities for the finalists on our website and hold events throughout the year like the launch contest, voting prize draws and the gala to encouraging participation and engagement in the Willows. The board will continue to look at ways to increase our voting as we move forward. The Willow Awards relies heavily on teacher-librarians, librarians and teachers across this province to help share our finalists with their communities and we would like to thank them for their continued support of our events. We also wish to thank the children and youth of this province for their passion and enthusiasm for our finalists.

The board was recently saddened to learn of the passing of Alicia Hanwell, who worked at BlackSun Design Inc., and was hugely instrumental in the creation and functioning of our current website. Her expertise, positivity and patience will be missed.

I would like to thank our committed Board for their countless hours of work to the Willow Awards. Without this dedicated board, the Willows would not be possible.

The SYRCA Annual Report reflects the ongoing work and successes of the 2018-2019 operating year. Minutes of the 2017-2018 Annual General Meeting will be available at the June 8, 2019 Annual General Meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Erin Walton President

### **FUNDRAISING REPORT**

Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards is a non-profit, volunteer-run, charitable organization that relies solely on donations to cover our expenditures. Currently, The Willow Awards has five different supporter levels: **Gold Patron** \$5,000 or more; **Silver Patron** \$3,000 - \$4,999; **Bronze Patron** \$1,000 - \$2,999; **Sponsors** \$500 - \$999; and **Friends** \$100 - \$499.

Corporate donations in recent years have been decreasing and this funding uncertainty has meant we have had to limit some of our activities. We are constantly trying to re-think and come up with new ways in which we can raise the funds we need to continue. In our proposed 2018-2019 budget, we hoped that we might be able to increase sponsorships this year to \$20,000.00.

Fifty-one contacts were made with businesses, corporations and individuals through letters, emails and online applications and proposals. Through these contacts \$13,050.00 was raised. As well, one school held a fundraiser to help support The Willows, a steak night was held in Regina, a Book Grab was held in Saskatoon and a number of individuals made donations. We have been grateful for the continued support of long-time patrons and welcomed the support of several who are new to our endeavours. Although we did not achieve our proposed budgetary goal, we will be able to continue for another year.

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who offered financial support to SYRCA this year. Your contributions and commitment to literacy and the children of Saskatchewan have made the Willow Awards possible once again. Every contribution, no matter how small, has made a difference and we are grateful.

Respectfully submitted, Annah Gullacher and Rhonda Wills Fundraising Co-Chairs

#### REGINA STEAK NIGHT FUNDRAISER

On Tuesday, April 24, 2018, Regina board members organized a Willow Awards steak night fundraiser at Bushwakkers Brewing Company in Regina. Fifty-seven tickets priced at \$30 were sold and guests enjoyed an informal evening with friends.

The evening's format was similar to the year before, with the exception being the addition of a mini silent auction. A few silent auction items were generously donated by a couple of local business and by Willow Board members and their families. The 2017 steak night featured a "bag of books" event—an evening highlight. This year we repeated its success. Guests were invited to pay ten dollars or more to fill a bag with books. These were books which had been submitted by publishers the previous year for consideration. To further promote the Willow Awards, Regina board members created a prominent display that shared information about the Willow Awards as well as the 2018 Willow Awards Finalists with fundraiser attendees and other patrons of the pub.

In total \$1462.50 was raised at this event; with a majority of the money coming from the "bag of books." The evening provided both an opportunity to promote the Willow Awards and to raise some money in support of the board's goals. The Steak Night event was enjoyed by all in attendance.

## SASKATOON BOOK GRAB FUNDRAISER

On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, the Saskatoon section of the Willow Awards held an incredibly successful book grab. Held at the Rusty MacDonald Library Branch's community room, we were able to sell out in under 30 minutes and had a line of people waiting to enter at 6 pm. For exchange of \$15 minimum donation, guests were invited to fill a bag of books. Advertising was mainly through social media and committee members sharing the poster with school staff in local school divisions. In total, we raised over \$600. Cost of room rental was \$33.60.

A huge thanks to those who helped with the book grab: Amy Korver, Yvonne Denomy, Darrelle Downs, Lindsey Martel, Joelene Linner, Hali Hamel, Susan Voitka-Seager

### TREASURER'S REPORT

The SYRCA Willow Awards wishes to extend our sincere thanks to our valued sponsors and members whose support has allowed us to continue The Willow Awards through difficult fiscal years.

The 2018-19 SYRCA Willow Awards annual review engagement is available for download from our website, or a copy can be mailed upon request.

Respectfully submitted by

**Yvonne Denomy** 

Treasuer

### STICKER REPORT



Finalist stickers are circles, one inch in diameter. The green graphic on white, shown, is for finalist books; a similar sticker with green graphics on gold foil background is for winning books. Many schools and libraries identify Willow Award Finalist books in their collection by placing a Willow sticker on the spine or front cover of the books. Stickers are another way that we raise funds. Our sticker sales were over \$1,000, \$300more than last year, a substantial increase. This is probably due to an easily accessible order form on our new website and a webpage providing suggestions of where and how to use the stickers. The board continues to investigate easier payment options for the schools.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total Sales</b>	\$742.00	\$756.00	\$564.00	\$740.00	\$1,072.00

Respectfully submitted by **Pam Fov** 

### LAUNCHING THE WILLOW FINALISTS

Each year, every school in the province is encouraged to launch the new Willow Award nominees!

We are very interested in sharing the great work teacher librarians, librarians and school staff have done to promote this quality literature. During October and November participants can enter a competition to win a complete set of 30 nominated books by submitting a photo (photos) and/or a description of their local launch, such as bulletin boards, guest reader, book talking or a special project. Winners are randomly drawn. This year we received 17 submissions.

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

<u>Grand prize winner</u>: recipient of a full set of 2018 Shining, Diamond, and Snow Willow finalists (30 books): *Roberta LeBlanc, Outlook High School, Outlook.* 

<u>Runner Up Winner:</u> recipients of a full set of 2018 Shining Willow finalist books: *Rita Myrah*, *Schell School*, *Holdfast*, and *Kristen Fischer*, *Ecole Vickers Public School*, *Prince Albert*.

<u>Runner Up Winner:</u> recipients of a full set of 2018 Diamond Willow finalist books: *Lindsay Martel, Ecole Traditions Elementary School, Warman*, and *Graham Brace (teacher) Ruth Pawson Elementary School, Regina.* 

Runner Up Winner: recipients of a full set of 2018 Snow Willow finalist books: *Indian Head Public Library, Indian Head* and *Joan Wong, Rosetown Central High School, Rosetown*.

<u>Honorable Mention:</u> recipients receive a selection of books: Crystal Reddekopp, Regina Christian School, Regina, Shauvone Kiss, Westcliffe School, Marengo, and Lisa Fiorante, Dr. Perry/McVeety Elementary Schools, Regina.



Rosetown Central High School, Rosetown



William Hunt School Regina



## COMMUNICATIONS REPORT: THE WILLOW AWARDS WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

The Willow Awards website continues to be a key communication tool for everyone who needs information about The Willows and great Canadian literature! We are grateful to BlackSun Design Inc. for their continued support and guidance to make the site function well. With their help, we were able to upgrade our voting platform this year to aid in the vote submission process. We continue to receive positive comments from individuals using the site.

Some of the website's features include the ability:

- to look for books in our "Previous Years" archives
- to search for a book by title in our sitemap where titles are listed alphabetically
- to find information about books, authors, illustrators and publishers
- to submit votes online

#### You will also find:

- a revolving carousel of changing news items
- PDF's of the book covers that can be printed to aid in making displays
- printable versions of the bookmarks and a small version of the poster
- printable ballots to use with voters
- pictures showcasing ideas used to promote The Willows
- links to past Gala celebrations
- timely news items and
- a contact form that allows participants to easily communicate with the board

The SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala 2018 was live-streamed from Warman Community Middle School and Warman Public Library, in Warman, on our website. Many schools and classrooms across the province were able to watch the celebration live as it happened.

New this year, we have been able to make contact via email with individuals who subscribe during the vote submission process.

Facebook and Twitter continue to be platforms where we promote news about The Willow Awards. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter @willowawards. Use #willowawards when "tweeting" about The Willows. Visit our website at <a href="www.willowawards.ca">www.willowawards.ca</a>. We appreciate feedback from our users regarding improvements we can make in any of these areas.

Respectfully submitted,
Darrelle Downs
Social Media Co-ordinator
Rhonda Wills
Website Director





### 2019 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. Voters embrace the role of literary critic. They are excited to know that what they think matters and they eagerly await the announcement of the winners at the spring Gala. This year, there were 12,594 votes cast for the 2018 Willow Award finalists. This was comparable to other years in the past. The majority of votes continue to be cast for the Shining category. We were pleased to note that voting numbers in the Diamond and Snow levels were up from last year but will continue to investigate ways in which we can further promote reading and voting in these categories.

Votes by Category	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SHINING	10,871	11,839	12,680	9,901	13,898	11,144	11,213
DIAMOND	1,145	1,092	866	883	1,230	941	1061
SNOW	602	423	572	307	396	181*	320
TOTAL VOTES	12,618	13,354	14,118	11,040	15,524	12,266	12,594

<sup>\*</sup> In last year's AGM report Snow voting was listed at 30 votes. This was an error. Snow votes were at 181.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhonda Wills

**Website Director** 

#### **VOTING DRAWS**

This year, voting draws were held to encourage and to thank those participants who voted for the Willow Awards finalists. An early bird draw and two more draws were made for a selection of books, following the closing of the voting.

Congratulations to the following participants and their schools who were the lucky winners:

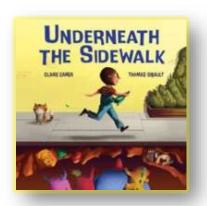
Marge Roszell TL, Ecole River Heights, Saskatoon (Early Bird)

Janet Valley, W.H. Ford School, Regina

Wendy Paquin, Broadview School, Broadview SK,

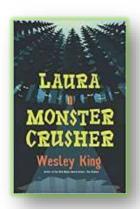
## **2018 WILLOW AWARD WINNERS**

#### **SHINING WILLOW**



<u>Underneath the Sidewalk</u> by Claire Eamer, illustrated by Thomas Gibault

#### **DIAMOND WILLOW**



**Laura Monster Crusher** by Wesley King

#### **SNOW WILLOW**



Yellow Dog by Miriam Körner

## PROGRAM: SHINING WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

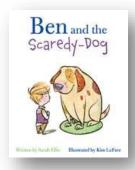
With only one new member to our committee, our committee was made up of enthusiastic and passionate teachers, teacher librarians, library technicians, and children's programmers. We considered approximately 150 books this year and held many meetings filled with passionate and insightful discussions.

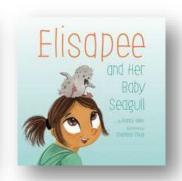
Thank you to our dedicated readers: Erin Boyle, Cindy Bretell, Wilfred Burton, Kathryn Drapak, Annah Gullacher, Hali Hamel, Laurie Hnatiuk, Joelene Linner, Lindsay Martel, Kerri Anne Nakoneshny, Stephanie Ochitwa, Lindsay Sali, and Susan Voitka Seager.

The Shining Willow Committee is pleased to present the finalists for the 2019 Shining Willow Award.

Respectfully submitted by Amy Korver Shining Willow Committee Chair

#### SHINING WILLOW FINALISTS FOR 2019







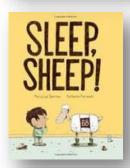














## PROGRAM: DIAMOND WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The 2019 Diamond Willow reading committee had a high volume of submissions this year with 136 nominations, including 8 titles rolled over from last year. Four titles were passed up to the Snow Committee and 5 titles were moved down to the Shining Committee. After the finalists were selected, 27 titles have been rolled over for consideration for the 2020 awards.

The Diamond Willow Committee was made up of 12 wonderful teachers, retired and practicing teacher librarians and public librarians. The committee had a difficult task this year as the quantity and quality of the books submitted was impressive. We spent countless hours reading and debating the merits of the various titles to reach a consensus on the 2019 Diamond Willow finalists. Thank you to the excellent committee consisting of Jessica Cammer, Kendra Bender, Susan Holmes, Elann McChesney, Rhonda Wills, Donna Lindstrom, Charmaine Stouse, Heather Dolmage, Morgan Hunter, Debbi-Lynn Bateson, Melissa Randall and Erin Walton.

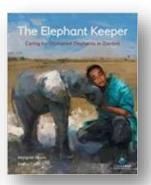
The Diamond Willow Committee is pleased to present the finalists for the 2019 Diamond Willow Award.

Respectfully submitted by Erin Walton
Diamond Willow Chair

#### **DIAMOND WILLOW FINALISTS FOR 2019**



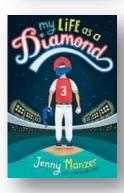




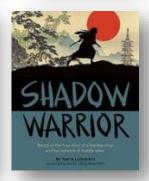














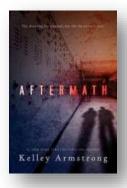
## PROGRAM: SNOW WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

We once again had a great committee of readers for the Snow Willows this year! The readers were Kristopher Barnes, Ruth Elliott, Darrelle Downs, Cassandra Mireau, Amanda Irvine, Danielle Bergen, Yvonne Denomy, Grace Sinclair, and Kimberley Thomliston. Joining our group this year was Brenna Sych. Countless hours were spent reading and discussing the over 70 titles that were considered. Thanks to the committee's hard work, we have an exciting, high-quality group of nominees for the 2019 Willow Awards!

The Snow Willow Committee is pleased to present the finalists for the 2019 Snow Willow Award

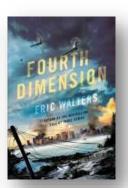
Respectfully submitted by **Darrelle Downs**, **Snow Willows Committee Chair** 

#### **SNOW WILLOW FINALISTS FOR 2019**





















## THE ANNUAL SASKENERGY WILLOW AWARDS GALA MAY 2018



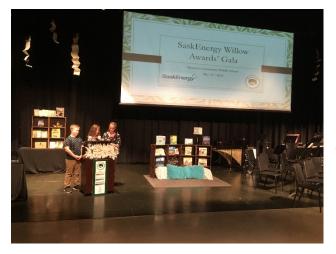
SaskEnergy Gala 2018 Stage Set

The SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala was hosted on Thursday, May 31, 2018 at Warman Community Middle School and Warman Public Library in Warman. Teachers Hali Hamel, Erin Boyle, Adine Sander, and Lisa Mason along with their students worked alongside head librarian Linda Weibe, to create a day that celebrated reading, writing, and Canadian literature.

In the morning, WCMS students enjoyed author visits from 2017 Willow finalists Beth Goobie and Jennifer Stokes. Jennifer Stokes worked with grade 5 and 6 students on the process and steps in creating a picture book including the illustration process. While Beth Goobie visited grade 7 classrooms and talked about the power of voice, how writing can help tell your story, and ultimately empower you. In total 100 students were able to work and listen alongside Beth and Jennifer.



Beth Goobie speaking to Grade 7 class



In the afternoon, WCMS classes, as well as classrooms from Warman Elementary and Traditions Elementary school, were invited to the theater for the awards ceremony. In a student lead ceremony, MC's Khari Ohryn, Samara Ryce, and Cade Sokolosky confidently lead guests through the program.



The grade 8 school band performed O'Canada.

Students from Mrs. Boyle's grade 6 classroom co-wrote and performed the poem, "The Power of a Book"





Mrs. Lori Jeschke, Director of Education for Prairie Spirit School Division, was the honored guest speaker, speaking to the audience on the power of books and how anyone, at any age, will discover the magic that books hold.

Finally, the time came that everyone was waiting for: the announcement of the winners! A Video featuring Grade 7 and 8 WCMS students, created by Everett Horbay and Erica Howarth, named the finalists for the Snow Willow Awards and Emerson Jones and Brooklyn Norberg announced the winner: The Pain Eater by Beth Goobie. Beth Goobie was on hand to accept her award.

Diamond Willow Finalist Presentation was created by Ryland Kusch and Dakota featured Grade 5 and 6 WCMS students. Brenna McLean and Kane Willick announced that <u>I Am Not a Number</u> by Jenny Dupluis and Kathy Kacer had one. Both authors were unable to attend, but they sent video messages as a thank you.

Last, the Shining Willow finalists were presented in a video created by Logan Turton and Brandon Pizzy, featuring Grade 2 students from Traditions Elementary School. Trinity Guenther and Aislin Camilleri were proud to announce the final winner: <u>Frank and Laverne</u>! Jennifer Stokes was on hand to accept her award and Dave Whamond sent his regrets.



The ceremony concluded with Leslie Gosselin, representing title sponsor SaskEnergy, presenting Warman Community Middle School and Warman Public Library with a commemorative plaque to celebrate hosting the gala. SaskEnergy has been supporting the SYRCA Willow Awards and celebrating fabulous Canadian literature for 16 years!







Amy Korver, on behalf of the SYRCA Board, presented the school with a set of all thirty Finalists for the 2018 Willow Awards, a commemorative plaque, and gifts for Gala organizers

Following the ceremony, a reception was held for the authors, student participants, and invited guests in the Warman Public Library. It was a wonderful way to conclude a beautiful celebration of reading!

Respectfully submitted by Amy Korver and Hali Hamel Co Gala Liaisons



## **SASKENERGY GALA 2018 ALBUM**



Teachers and Students involved in the Gala take their bow.



Beth Goobie and teacher, Mrs. Boyle



Lori Jeschke, Darrelle Downs, Leslie Gosselin, and Amanda Irvine.



SYRCA Reading Committee members: Melody Wood, Darrelle Downs, Yvonne Denomy, Amy Korver and Amanda Irvine.

## SYRCA – THE WILLOW AWARDS INC. 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:**





#### **Access Communications Children's Fund**

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





SaskEnergy

#### SYRCA Bronze Patrons have generously contributed \$1,000 to \$2,999:





**P3**A



Cameco

## SYRCA – THE WILLOW AWARDS INC. PATRONS, SPONSORS AND FRIENDS

SYRCA Sponsors have generously contributed \$500 - \$999:



**Hi-Tec Profiles** 



**United Library Services** 



McNally Robinson Booksellers



**Superannuated Teachers** of Saskatchewan – Regina Chapter

**SYRCA Friends generously contributing \$100 - \$499:** 

Saskatchewan Reading Council Ruth Garnett

Kinistino Public School Melody Wood

"You know you've read a good book when you turn the last page and feel a little as if you have lost a friend." – Paul Sweeney

"If you don't like to read, you haven't found the right book." – J.K.
Rowling



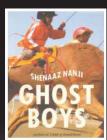
SASKATCHEWAN Young Readers' Choice

**Snow Willow Finalists** 



**Dominion** 

by Shane Arbuthnott



**Ghost Boys** 

by Shenaaz Nanji



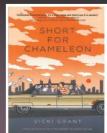
Hit the Ground Running

by Alison Hughes



**Optimists Die First** 

by Susin Nielsen



**Short for** Chameleon

by Vicki Grant



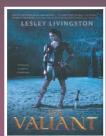
The Skeleton Tree

by Iain Lawrence



Summer's End

by Joel A. Sutherland



The Valiant

by Lesley Livingston



**Winnowing** 

by Vikki VanSickle



Yellow Dog



#### **GOLD PATRON**

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## THE WILLOW AWARDS