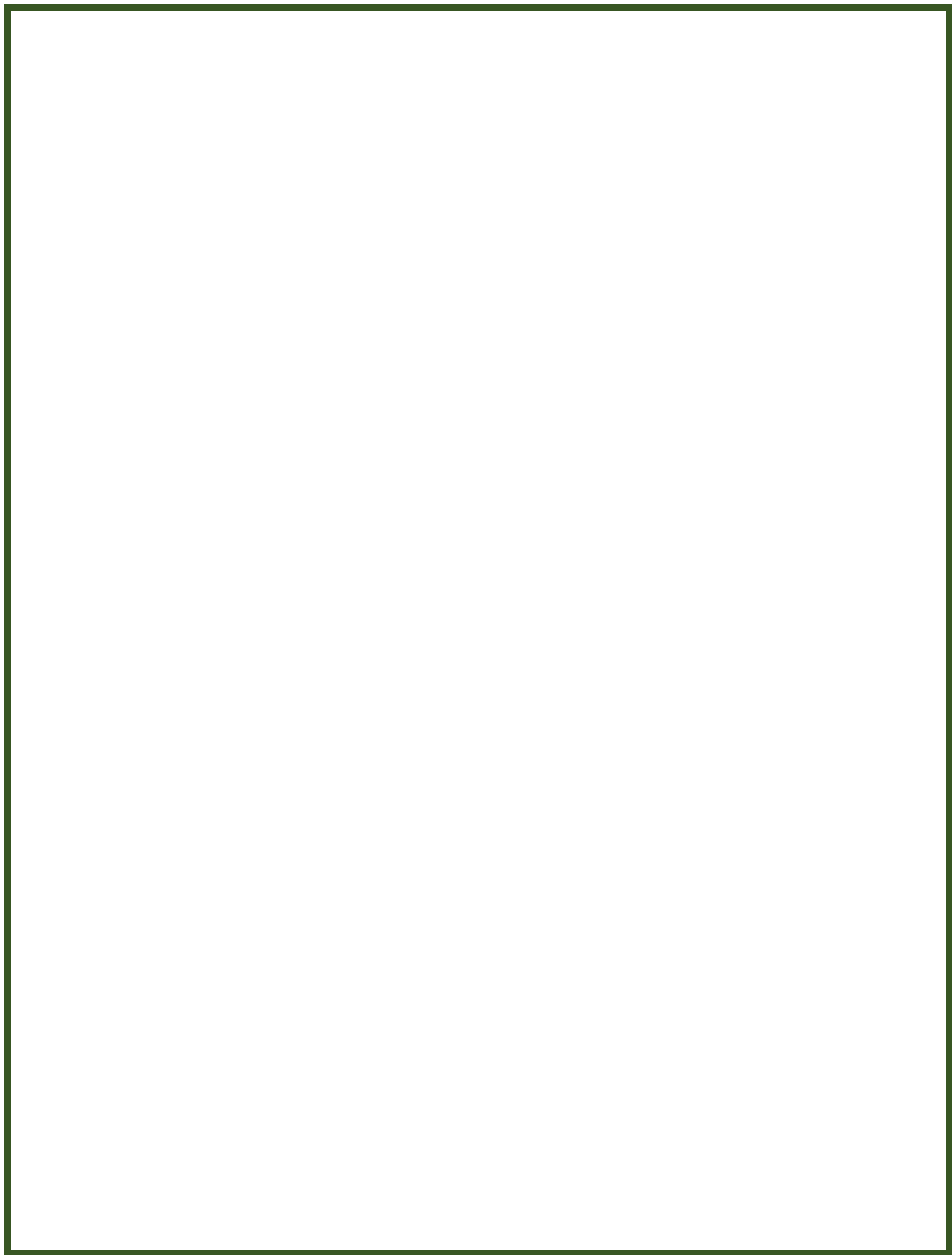


**SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG
READERS' CHOICE AWARDS**



**THE WILLOW AWARDS
ANNUAL REPORT
2020-2021**





WILLOW AWARDS

2020
SASKATCHEWAN
YOUNG READERS'
CHOICE

Snow Willow Finalists



Broken Strings
by Eric Walters
and Kathy Kacer



The Centre of the Universe
by Ria Voros



Don't Tell the Nazis
by Marsha Forchuk
Skrypuch



Funny You Don't Look Autistic
by Michael McCreary



The Journey of Little Charlie
by Christopher Paul
Curtis



The Justice Project
by Michael Betcherman



Sadia
by Colleen Nelson



Safe Harbour
by Christina Kilbourne



This Place: 150 Years Retold
by Karen Atkinson-Dunn,
Sonya Ann Branson,
Rachel Ocasio-Tindler,
Sean Ocasio-Tindler,
David A. Robertson,
Nigamewald James,
Seiden, Jan Storm,
Richard Van Camp,
Katherine Hermosa
and Chloë Hand



Trail of Crumbs
by Lisa J. Lawrence

Diamond Willow Finalists



Acting Wild: How We Behave Like Birds, Bugs and Beasts
by Maria Birmingham



Camp Average
by Craig Battle



The Collected Works of Gretchen Oyster
by Cary Fagan



Girl of the Southern Sea
by Michelle Kadarman



Harvey Comes Home
by Colleen Nelson



Missing Mike
by Shari Green



My Deal With the Universe
by Deborah Karbal



A Royal Guide to Monster Slaying
by Kelley Armstrong

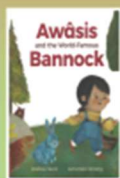


Tales Beyond the Brain
by Jeff Spigler

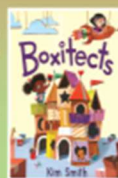


Too Young to Escape: a Vietnamese Girl Waits to be Reunited with Her Family
by Van Ho and
Marsha Forchuk
Skrypuch

Shining Willow Finalists



Awasis and the World-Famous Bannock
by Dallas Hunt
illustrated by Amanda
Strong



Boxitexts
by Kim Smith



Emma's Gems
by Anne Ramaud
illustrated by
Leanne Framson



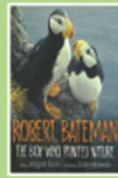
How to Give Your Cat a Bath in Five Easy Steps
by Nicole Winstanley
illustrated by
John Martin



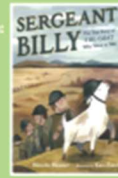
Karate Kaka-po
by Loretta Curtis
illustrated by
Stacy Curtis



Princess Puffybottom and Darryl
by Susan Nielsen
illustrated by Olivia
Chin Mueller



Robert Bateman: The Boy Who Painted Nature
by Margaret Ruess
illustrated by Robert
Bateman



Sergeant Billy: The True Story of the Goat Who Went to War
by Meredith Masser
illustrated by Kass
Reich



The Silence Slips In
by Aaron Hughes
illustrated by
Nimen Pollock



Triceratops Stomp
by Karen Patkau



www.willowawards.ca

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BOARD MEMBERS 2020-2021

President:

Erin Walton, Regina

Past President:

Vacant

Vice President - Communications:

Elann McChesney, Regina

Vice President- Website:

Rhonda Wills, Regina

Treasurer:

Darrelle Downs, Saskatoon

Secretary:

Heather Dolmage, Regina

Director - Fundraising:

Annah Gullacher, Saskatoon

Director – Print & Posters:

Leanne Holstein, Regina & Jara Langill, Regina

Director - SLA Rep:

Judy Nicholson, Regina

Director – LENS Rep:

Pam Foy, Moosomin

Director – SSLA Rep:

Hannah Patterson, Regina

Directors at Large:

Terry Wood, Regina

Lindsay Shawarski, Warman

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 and Saskatchewan 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Task & Responsibilities• Board Meetings Fiscal Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget• Fund Development Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Website• Posters, Bookmarks• Internal Communications• External Communications• Conferences | Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Membership• Board Memberships, Human Resources, Volunteers Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book Selection• Gala – winning authors’ attendance, reading at host schools• Launch• Educational Activities |
|--|--|

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Board of Directors of the Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards (SYRCA), The Willow Awards Inc., met five times during the 2020-2021 year.

The board said good-bye to three members who stepped down at the end of 2019-2020 year; Amy Korver, who received a long-time service award, Cameo Remple and Susan Voitka Seager. Lindsay Shawarski, from Saskatoon, and Hannah Patterson, from Regina, were recruited for this year, creating a board of thirteen members.

The Willow Awards was originally initiated by the Saskatchewan School Library Association (SSLA) in 2000. Over time the connection between the SSLA organization was lost, so it was with great excitement that we welcomed Hannah Patterson as the appointed SSLA representative to our board this year, to renew that association.

As a non-profit volunteer run organization, fundraising is crucial to keeping the Willow Awards operational. Another year of dealing with Covid-19 nudged us to think outside the box regarding a fundraiser. The Mystery Book Grab Fundraiser that was conceived was a great success and well received. While obtaining sponsorship during the pandemic was challenging, faithful sponsors once again came alongside us and through their support and our fundraising achievement we exceeded our budgetary goal for this year.

The Willow Awards website, Mailchimp, Twitter and Facebook accounts are our main online communication. We continue with yearly mailouts of promotional materials to all schools and libraries across the province showcasing the newest finalists. For a fourth year, we were privileged to promote the Willow Awards to future educators at the University of Regina and for the first time, University of Saskatchewan education students. The Willow Awards was also a breakout session at the Regina Teachers' Convention allowing us to reach current educators.

To encourage participation and engagement with the Willows, we continue to include book activities for the finalist titles on our website and hold events throughout the year like the launch contest and our voting draws. We once again had a wonderful opportunity to offer a Skype Author Visit Contest with Colleen Nelson, a 2020 Diamond and Snow Willow Finalist.

With Covid-19 restrictions and online learning on and off throughout the year, gala plans were altered and the board moved to extend the 2021 voting deadline to April 16th. As with last year, voting was significantly down due to all the uncertainty of the year.

The upcoming 2021-2022 year is The Willow Awards 20th Anniversary and the board has been preparing for this momentous milestone and are looking forward to celebrating with all our supporters.

The Willow Awards relies heavily on teacher-librarians, librarians, teachers, parents, children, youth and sponsors across this province for our continued operation and success and the board truly thanks everyone for their support.

I would like to thank our diligent board whose passion for children's literature results in countless hours of work that advance and promote the Willow Awards each year.

The SYRCA Annual Report reflects the ongoing work and successes of the 2020-2021 operating year. Minutes of the 2019-2020 Annual General Meeting will be available at the June 12, 2021 Annual General Meeting, which will be held through Zoom this year.

Respectfully submitted by,
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.

This year, the SYRCA Willow Awards are especially grateful for the continued support of our sponsors throughout this difficult year. We are fortunate to be able to continue to offer this program to children in Saskatchewan because they need it more than ever. In the 2020-2021 year, seven businesses and corporations generously donated \$8,300. Unfortunately, one of our major sponsors was unable to support us this year, but we understand and support the fairness of the policy that directed this decision and are hopeful that they will be able to support us again in the future. As reported by Judy Nicholson, team members also held a Book Grab Fundraiser with great success. In total, the generous donations from businesses, corporations, and individual donations through our Book Grab Fundraiser raised \$14,355.

The generous support from our patrons has enabled the SYRCA- The Willow Awards to continue providing children an opportunity to read quality Canadian literature and feel empowered by voting for their favourite book. While we are unable to hold the Gala in person again this year, we know that children across Saskatchewan will still benefit from and enjoy the online Gala held by the William Hunt school in Regina. We are sincerely grateful to all our patrons for their part in supporting literacy in Saskatchewan.

SYRCA Gold Patrons generously contributing \$5000 or more:

N/A

SYRCA Silver Patrons generously contributing \$3000 - \$4999:

SaskEnergy

SYRCA Bronze Patrons generously contributing \$1000 - \$2999:

Cameco

Sasktel Pioneers

SYRCA Sponsors generously contributing \$500 - \$999:

Hi-Tec Profiles Inc.

McNally Robinson

ULS

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

Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan - Regina Chapter

Saskatchewan Literacy Network

Respectfully submitted by,

Annah Gullacher

Fundraising Chair

TREASURER'S REPORT

This was a very interesting year for the Willows financially, with so many things being online, and not being able to meet up in person, we ended up doing most of our business through Zoom meetings. Because of the limits on what we could do, our costs for some things were not as high as previous years, but that did not stop our need for raising money and providing the best Willow Awards Gala that we could. The Mystery Book Grab Fundraiser was an amazing success and generated much needed funds and we thank all our many sponsors for their continued support as well.

We want to thank and acknowledge Rodney Blakley, Saskatoon accountant for all the hard work you have done for the Willows over the past years, and thank you for your service.

We would also like to welcome Sandra Jackson, Regina accountant, for being our new SYRCA accountant. Her knowledge and expertise is greatly appreciated, and has done a financial statement - Notice to Readers for us.

Respectfully submitted by,
Darrelle Downs
Treasurer

STICKER REPORT

Finalist stickers are circles, one inch in diameter. The green graphic on white, shown here, is for finalist books; a similar sticker with the green graphic on gold foil background is for winning books. Many schools and libraries identify Willow Award Finalist books in their collections by placing a Willow sticker on the spine or front cover of the books. Stickers are another way that we raise funds.

Information on this year's sticker sales are TBA.



| Year | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|-------------|----------|----------|--------|-------|------|
| Total Sales | \$564.00 | \$740.00 | \$1072 | \$657 | TBA |

LAUNCHING THE WILLOW FINALISTS

Each year, every school and library in the province is encouraged to launch the new Willow Award finalists. They introduce these great books to their reading communities in many creative ways! We want to share the wonderful work teachers, teacher-librarians, librarians and the staff of schools 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(s) and/or a description of their local launch, such as bulletin boards, guest readers, book talks or a special project.

Many of the launch submissions that we received this year included ideas or combinations of ideas from previous years. It is encouraging to see what accommodations are being made around the COVID-19 pandemic guidelines. The constant that is always so good to hear about is the excitement and enjoyment that classes and students are experiencing through their exposure to the Willows, regardless of how it is done.

There were some new variations to note:

- Introducing the books to other classes through teacher created videos.
- Students created book trailers using WeVideo.
- Booktalks and readings through video chats.
- Partnerships between schools and public libraries with library staff giving booktalks and providing books
- A pre-reading vote called "Judge a Book by It's Cover" with results compared to post-reading votes.
- A website created to share student reviews of the books read individually and as a class.
- "Get Carried Away With Willow Books" – a hot air balloon delivering Willow books for story times.
- Book brackets continue to be popular and get many classes excited throughout a school.



Judge Bryant School, Regina

The Winner of a full set of Willow books (Shining, Diamond and Snow):

- Oungre Public Library and Lyndale School

Runners Up Winners of a set of Shining, Diamond or Snow Willow Books:

- Ecole Holy Mary School, Martensville
- Judge Bryant, Regina
- Fox Valley School

Honorable Mentions winning a selection of titles at various levels:

- Cupar School
- Valley Centre Colony School
- Henry Braun School, Regina
- Ecole Connaught School, Regina

The Willow Board would like to thank all that is done by librarians, teachers, teacher-librarians and parents across the province to promote reading and the Willows!

Respectfully submitted by,

Rhonda Wills

Website Director



Cupar School, Cupar



Henry Braun School, Regina

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Communicating information about the Willow Awards across the province is a team effort by the Willow Board. To help co-ordinate this, our Saskatchewan Library Association rep, Judy Nicholson, has been working this past year on a communication strategy that will provide a guide for future members of the board to follow. We are striving to make sure that the message that reaches everyone about the Willows is widespread and consistent.

Representatives from three organizations have members on the board including the Saskatchewan Library Association (SLA), the Literacy Educators Network of Saskatchewan (LENS) and the Saskatchewan School Library Association (SSLA). These people are instrumental in sharing information about the Willows with leading literacy promoters in our province.

Our Communications Director, is our liaison between the board and publishers across Canada. She contacts them asking for submissions early in our yearly cycle and communicates with them regarding finalist choices and winners as this information becomes available.

Communicating with past and potential sponsors is the ongoing job of the Fundraising Director and is outlined in the Fundraising report.

Co-ordinating the distribution of posters and bookmarks to schools, and libraries across the province falls to two members on the Board. This is an important visual communication piece and one that we hope all children in the province see at some point during the year.

The Willow Awards website continues to be the primary communication tool for everyone who needs information about the Willows. On the website, visitors can find information about books, authors, illustrators and publishers. Also included are activities to promote literacy through the use of the Willow titles. To help promote each of the Willow books, pdf's of the book covers are available for printing to aid in making displays, there are printable versions of the bookmarks and a smaller version of the poster, as well as pictures showcasing ideas used to promote the Willows. The website also includes an online form for submitting votes and printable ballots for use by voters. There are links to past Gala celebrations as well as an archive of past Willow titles. A contact form that allows participants to easily communicate with the board is managed by the President and fields many inquiries about the Willows, both specific and general. Our website is hosted by Blacksun Design Inc. and we are appreciative of their continued support. We continue to receive positive comments from individuals using the site and hope that visitors find it a useful tool. People can visit our website at willowawards.ca.

In this past year, COVID-19 restrictions prevented us from hosting the Gala celebration with the winning authors. In the past, we have live-streamed the Gala event on our website so that all Saskatchewan children could watch as the winners were announced. In lieu of that this past year, Board members worked with students from Annaheim School, Annaheim, Saskatchewan and Wilfred Hunt School, Regina, Saskatchewan to introduce and celebrate the winning authors virtually. These video messages were posted on our website when the winners were announced in June.

Another tool used to communicate Willow Awards news includes emails via Mailchimp, which individuals can subscribe to during the voting process. Facebook and Twitter also continue to be platforms where we disseminate information about The Willow Awards. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter @willowawards. Use #willowawards when "tweeting" about The Willows. We appreciate feedback from our users regarding improvements we can make in any of these areas.

Respectfully submitted by,
Rhonda Wills
Website and Social Media Director

2021 MYSTERY BOOK GRAB FUNDRAISER REPORT

The COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible to host the 2020 Books, Burgers, and Beers fundraiser in Regina in April 2020. This year, the board decided to try an online fundraiser instead. The reason was two-fold. First of all, we had a surplus of publishers' book submissions that we wanted to get into the hands of children. The second reason was to raise funds for the Willows so that we could continue our programming. As a result, the idea of the Mystery Book Grab Fundraiser was born. For a donation of \$20, supporters of The Willow Awards could fill out an online form indicating which category of Shining, Diamond or Snow mystery books they would like to receive.

The board worked collaboratively to develop the fundraiser concept, promote the messaging through a poster, social media and an online pre-order form and to coordinate the logistics of this large scale endeavour. An exchange of books was made to even out the numbers between Saskatoon and Regina. Two board members volunteered to host the distribution points, one in Regina and one in Saskatoon. The individuals who had been storing the books got them bagged and brought to the distribution points. The online order form was monitored daily. Every individual who ordered was contacted by email to let them know where they could pick up their books and to verify orders. Receipts were created for all donations. There were over 120 pre-orders representing 27 urban and rural communities across Saskatchewan.

Distribution days were March 20th, 25th, and 27th and followed COVID-19 protocols. We asked that donations be made in exact cash to limit the handling of money. In the end, the majority of the bags were picked up, with many donations exceeding the suggested donation price of \$20.00 per bag of 10 books. Pahkisimon Nuye?áh Library System, located in the north of the province, gave a donation for the remaining books and received 16 Snow Willow bags, 4 Shining Willow bags, and several extras including books at an adult level that had been submitted at one time.

The total number of bags distributed included 129 bags of Shining Willow books, 59 bags of Diamond Willow books, and 67 bags of Snow Willow books. Each bag contained 10 books for a total of 2550 books. Total donations were \$6055.00, which far-exceeded the board's expectations. It was indicated by several donors that this was a great opportunity to acquire books and they looked forward to similar events in the future. We are grateful to all of those individuals who participated.

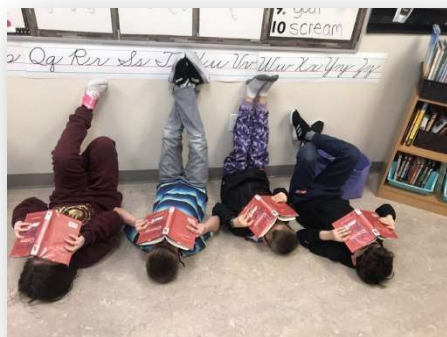
Respectfully submitted by,

Judy Nicholson

SLA Representative to the SYRCA Board

#WINWITHWILLOWS SKYPE CONTEST

In December and January, the Willow Awards teamed up once again with finalist author Colleen Nelson. She kindly offered to conduct two free Skype sessions, retail value \$250 each, with students who were reading her books, Diamond finalist *Harvey Comes Home* and Snow finalist *Sadia*.



We held a contest asking individuals to enter by taking a photo of their Willow reader(s) enjoying the books and sharing the photo with us on Twitter with



#winwithWillows.

Two lucky classes who tweeted pictures of students reading her books were the winners. Congratulations to students at Miller Elementary School in Melville and École Dr. A.E. Perry School in Regina!

A big thank you to Colleen Nelson for offering to do this for Willow readers! Thank you, as well, to everyone who submitted pictures of students reading these great books! Here are a few of their photos:

Respectfully submitted by,
Rhonda Wills
Website and Social Media Director

VOTING DRAWS

This year, voting draws were held to encourage and to thank those participants who submitted votes 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 schools who were the lucky winners:

- Jean Kobialka, Sutherland School, Saskatoon (Early Bird)
- Rhona Brinkman, Lake Lenore School, Lake Lenore
- Rita Myrah, Schell School, Holdfast

Respectfully submitted by,
Rhonda Wills
Website and Social Media Director

2021 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.

In the past, voting has closed on March 31st. This allowed time to contact winning authors and make arrangements for them to travel to participate in the Gala celebration near the end of May. Last year, our voting timeline was interrupted with the closure of schools because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both last year and this year, promoting the Willows in schools was challenging with COVID-19 protocols in place. Students were not able to access the Willow books as easily when they were at school and not able to take books home to read. This year, a number of school divisions moved to remote learning in mid-March. We recognized that, once again, voting might be interrupted and a decision was made to extend voting until April 16th.

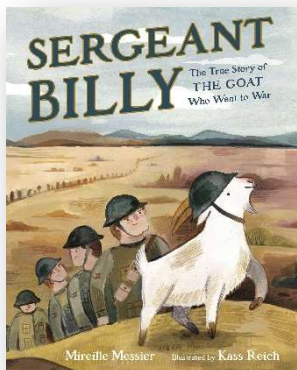
Through all of the challenges that this year has brought to our communities, we are awed by the continued participation of teachers, teacher-librarians, librarians, library technicians and parents in encouraging children to read these great books! Votes were submitted from across the province, from rural and small town schools as well as schools in the larger urban centres. We had votes submitted from public libraries and from parents who are homeschooling their children. Once again, our voting numbers were lower than we would like to see. However, in this second year of “pandemic learning”, we were happy to see that votes had increased by 45% from last year. We are hopeful for the future when the pandemic isn’t dominating our lives.

| Votes by Category | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|------|
| SHINING | 12,680 | 9,901 | 13,898 | 11,144 | 11,213 | 3652 | 5728 |
| DIAMOND | 866 | 883 | 1,230 | 941 | 1061 | 448 | 440 |
| SNOW | 572 | 307 | 396 | 181 | 320 | 247 | 144 |
| TOTAL VOTES | 14,118 | 11,040 | 15,524 | 12,266 | 12,594 | 4347 | 6312 |

Respectfully submitted by,
Rhonda Wills
Website and Social Media Director

2020 WILLOW AWARDS WINNERS

Shining Willow



**Sergeant Billy:
The True Story of the Goat Who Went to War**
By Mireille Messier

Diamond Willow

Harvey Comes Home
By Colleen Nelson



Snow Willow



Don't Tell The Nazis
By Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch

PROGRAM: SHINING WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

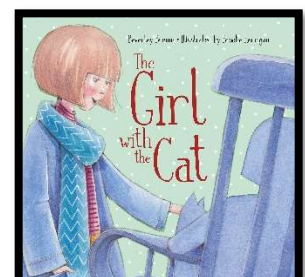
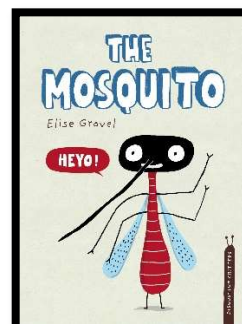
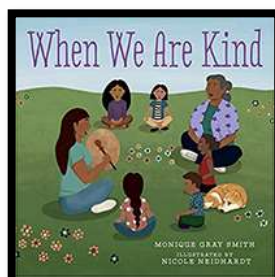
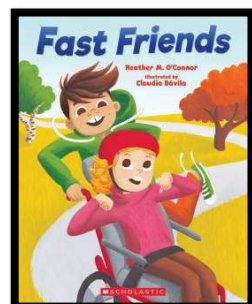
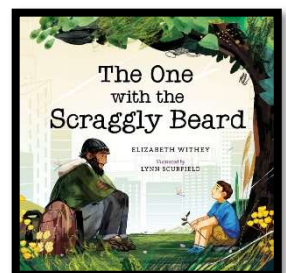
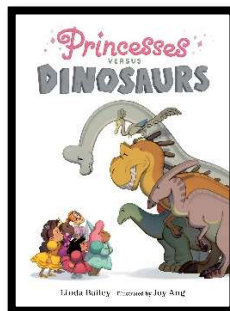
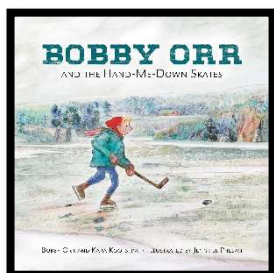
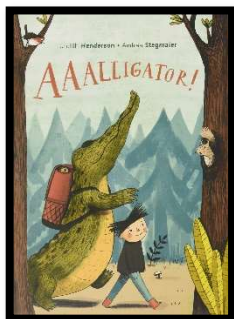
The Shining Willow Selection Committee for 2020 continues to be made of enthusiastic, and passionate current and retired teachers, teacher librarian, library technicians, and children's programmers. This year, we considered approximately 180 books. As usual, our meetings were filled with passionate and insightful discussions. During the Covid 19 global pandemic Zoom was used at our meetings to include all members who lived in and outside of Saskatoon. We continue to use google documents to share comments and reviews about the books read by various members to help frame our discussions.

A huge thank you to our dedicated readers: Annah Gullacher, Lindsay Martel, Kathryn Drapak, Wilfred Burton, Laurie Hnatiuk, Joelene Linner, Hali Hamel, Cameo Rempel, Amy Korver, Twyla McNeil, Wenona Gedir Lundsten, Aimee Sipple, Lindsay Shawarski.

The Shining Willow Committee is pleased to present the finalists for the 2020 Shining Willow Award.

Respectfully submitted by,
Lindsay Shawarski
Shining Willow Chair

SHINING WILLOW FINALISTS FOR 2021



PROGRAM: DIAMOND WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

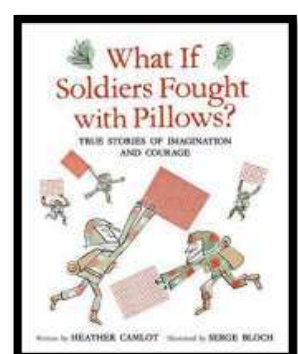
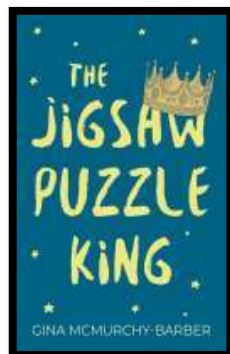
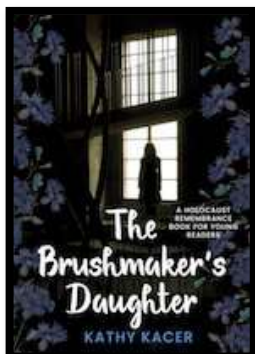
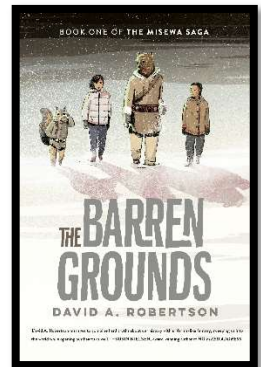
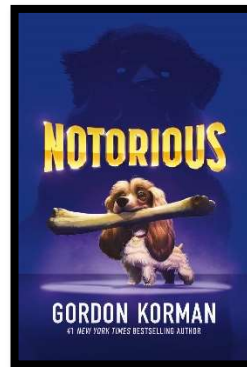
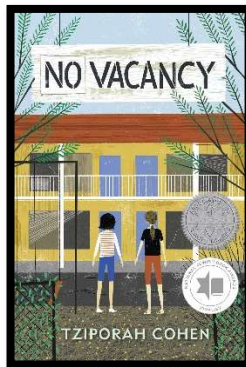
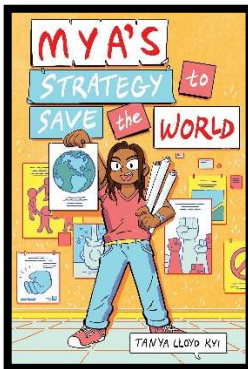
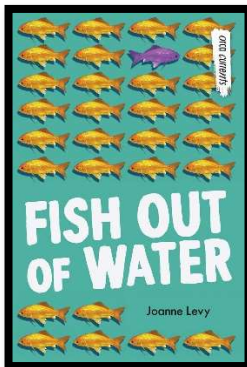
The 2021 Diamond Willow reading committee had a significant submission of 147 titles up for consideration, including 23 titles rolled over from last year. Eleven titles were passed up to the Snow Committee and 23 titles were moved down to the Shining Committee. After the finalists were selected, 7 titles have been rolled over for consideration for the 2022 awards.

The Diamond Willow Committee was a small but mighty group of 9 immensely dedicated readers from different walks of life including both current and retired educators, teacher librarians and public librarians. Thank you to the exceptional committee consisting of Jessica Cammer, Susan Holmes, Rhonda Wills, Donna Lindstrom, Charmaine Stouse, Morgan Hunter, Heather Walton, Joanne Patrom and Erin Walton whose commitment and thoughtful discussions culminated in the selection of the 2021 Diamond Willow Finalists.

The Diamond Willow Committee is pleased to present the finalists for the 2021 Diamond Willow Award.

Respectfully submitted by,
Erin Walton
Diamond Willow Chair

DIAMOND WILLOW FINALISTS FOR 2021



PROGRAM: SNOW WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

This year our Snow Reading Committee had to face many new challenges because of Covid. We missed getting together and sharing snacks while having great discussions on which books we liked and why. But even with all the challenges we faced, we still had a great group of readers who were able to get together via Zoom and choose the best books we could.

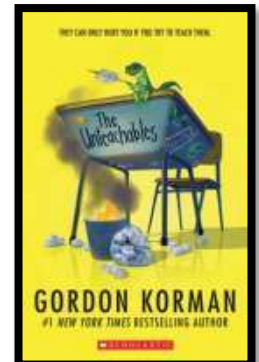
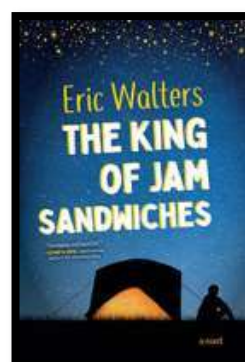
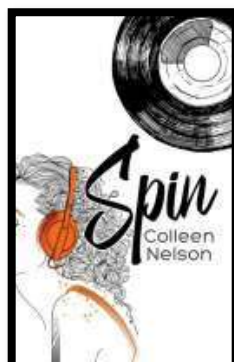
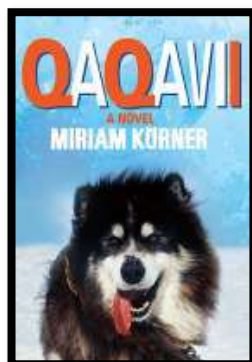
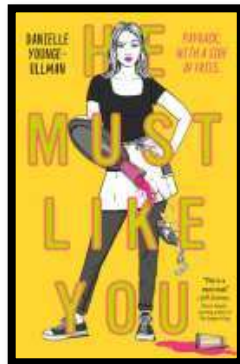
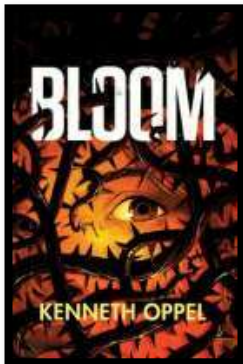
A huge thank-you to all our readers. Without you, this would not be possible. Even though the Snow Reading Committee is a small group, with only seven readers, they are truly the best, most devoted group. We welcomed two new members this year, Magi McFadden, a teacher from Pinehouse, SK, and Nicole Downs, a student taking her Library and Information Technology course. Thank you so much for joining. Our returning readers are Amanda Irvine, Danielle Bergen, Katherine Fiander, and Shelby Smith. These four are the best readers anyone could ask for and we are so lucky to have them in our group.

This year the Snows received 78 nominations and sent three down to Diamond. Even with less numbers being sent in than previous years, it was still difficult to narrow it down to just ten finalists.

We proudly submit the 2021 nominees for the Snow Willow Awards

Respectfully submitted by,
Darrelle Downs
Snow Willow Chair

SNOW WILLOW FINALISTS FOR 2021



THE ANNUAL SASKENERGY WILLOW AWARDS GALA 2020

One thing we could say with confidence is that this Gala celebration was a unique adaptation to the challenges presented by the pandemic in 2020. When it became clear that it would not be possible to hold an in-person celebration, we looked for ways to host the celebration online.

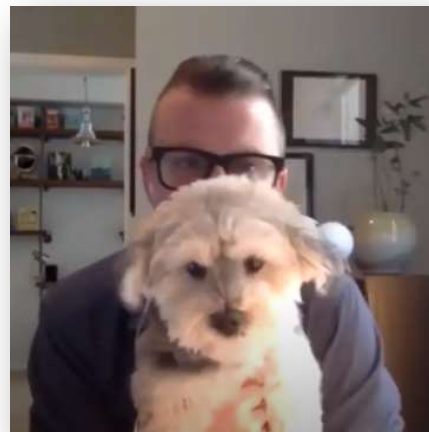
Students from the William Hunt School in Regina and the Annaheim School in Annaheim met over Zoom to plan the celebration. We decided on an interview format with a creative introduction by the students. The students came up with questions that they wanted to ask the authors.

On the day of the interview, students from Grades 2 and 3 met with Cale Atkinson, the winning author of the Shining age category. They welcomed him with handmade signs and a cloud of confetti!

Cale Atkinson spoke about the process of writing his winning book, *Sir Simon*. The students then asked him a variety of interesting questions, ranging from his writing process to his favourite pieces of art! As he spoke about his drawing process, Cale Atkinson had the students get pieces of paper and follow along as he taught them to draw Sir Simon, the main character from his book. He even taught them how to animate their drawings!



As he was drawing, the students' sharp eyes saw a little creature running around in the background, and so of course they wanted to know what it was. Viewers then got to meet his dog and one of the students' dogs as they ended the interview.



THE ANNUAL SASKENERGY WILLOW AWARDS GALA 2020 CONT.

Students from the Wilfred Hunt School and the Annaheim School decided that they wanted to introduce the winning author of the Diamond category with a spooky theme. They darkened their rooms and even found a way to let out a cloud of steam to set the stage as they welcomed Joel Sutherland to the SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala.



We think Joel Sutherland liked it!



Sutherland spoke about the process of writing his book. When the students asked how he came up with his ideas, he told the story of coming across the spooky house in his hometown and finding out the mysterious stories that were told about it. His imagination took hold, and he began to write the story of *The House Next Door*.

THE ANNUAL SASKENERGY WILLOW AWARDS GALA 2020 CONT.

Students from the Wilfred Hunt school celebrated the winning title in the Snow category, *Aftermath*, by Kelley Armstrong. They had thoughtful questions for the author of this timely and hard-hitting story. Armstrong spoke about her thought process and research that went into writing this story.



While we love to be able to meet in person and have the grandeur of the Gala ceremony, the silver lining of hosting the SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala online was that our students got to have a direct conversation with the authors, and all of the participating children across Saskatchewan got to hear their fascinating discussion. Children from each of the three age categories volunteered for the role, and were asked to come up with their own interview questions. They also collaborated to create an introduction and congratulatory message for each author. In this way, the Willow Awards were truly more child-centered than ever. We are grateful to all of our sponsors who enabled us to host all three of the authors, and to our participating students and board members who found innovative ways to host the Gala in these unusual circumstances. This year was tough, but so are the children of Saskatchewan!

Respectfully submitted by,
Annah Gullacher and Elann McChesney
Gala Liaisons

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

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

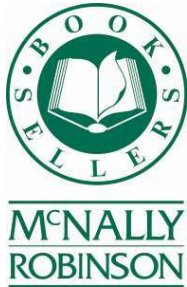
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“In the case of good books, the point is not to see how many of them you can get through, but rather how many can get through to you.” – Mortimer J. Adler

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.” – Dr. Seuss



THE
WILLOW
AWARDS