

BACKGROUND – 2023 Education Hall of Fame Inductees

The Northwest Territories (NWT) Department of Education, Culture and Employment launched the Education Hall of Fame in 2010 to recognize that we all play an important role in supporting the education of our children. It reflects the valuable contributions that people make as educators, Elders, custodians, administrators, volunteers, coaches, students, advocates, sponsors and businesses.

2023 Inductees



Charlene Liske is a fierce advocate for Indigenous knowledge, ethics, languages and learning. With the Yellowknives Dene First Nation in her home community of Dettah, and with Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning, for close to two decades, Charlene has organized and delivered land-based educational programming.

As a strong Dene leader, Charlene has inspired generations of learners – guiding and supporting with unflinching kindness. She deeply understands the transformative and healing power of education and always has time to support a student or community member in need. A lifelong learner, Charlene continually seeks new training and education opportunities to better support students and educators. She never backs down from a challenge, and is a relentless champion of the positive impacts of Indigenous-led and on-the-land education.

Charlene is an involved parent and community member, providing special care and attention for Elders and single mothers. She also leads summer hide camp programming at Dechinta, coaches at the Arctic Winter Games, and is a regular volunteer at community events. Charlene exemplifies Dene ethics and values and is a worthy inductee in the NWT Education Hall of Fame Community Outreach category.



Lima Baroryee had a remarkable impact on the children she taught and their families. Nominated posthumously, Lima touched many lives as an Early Childhood Educator at Raven's Nest Daycare in Yellowknife.

Nomination letters describe Lima as honest, genuine, kind, charismatic and colourful, with a booming laugh. Lima would greet children and their families with a smile every morning; parents said it was like leaving their children in the hands of extended family. They felt reassured that with Lima their children were safe and loved.

Lima was known for her empathy and kindness, creating an inclusive learning space that respected each child's identity and differences. At her funeral, many parents learned that Lima not only had a special nickname for *their* child, but one for *every* child in her care. The names were based on the child's personality and interests – it made them all feel proud and special.

Lima would attend children's birthday parties, foster their individual interests and strengths, and created a tight-knit community with all the families. Originally from Bangladesh, Lima supported children to embrace, respect and celebrate multiple cultures, languages and worldviews. *'It was apparent that caring for children was more than just a job, for her – it was a passion, a life-long calling,'* read one nomination. Lima's impact on children and early childhood education will have a lasting impact in the Northwest Territories.



Alan Karasiuk has had a distinguished career in education spanning 35 years (31 in the NWT). An advocate and education champion, his philosophy is that students' learning and well-being always come first. He was named one of Canada's Outstanding Principals in 2012 and is completing his 23rd year as principal of Paul William Kaeser (PWK) High School in Fort Smith.

Alan is an innovator in inclusive and experiential education, which is evident in the creation and development of the Phoenix School, an alternative study program at PWK. For almost 20 years, this program has allowed countless students to graduate high school,

many of whom were challenged by the traditional schooling model. Alan embraces and immerses himself in Indigenous education through language and cultural programming, which are at the core of the program's identity.

Through Alan's leadership and open-door policy, PWK empowers students, families, Elders, Indigenous groups and the community to have meaningful input in how the school is run. Their feedback on programming, budgets, special events and strategic planning is encouraged and valued through the authentic partnerships he has fostered. Through Alan and the school's involvement in the community – from cultural and fish camps to sporting and fundraising events – PWK is seen as a partner and positive influence in Fort Smith.

Alan is always present for his students and the community, not only in school but in his daily life. He elevates students and strengthens their confidence to believe in themselves. When faced with challenges, Alan sees an opportunity. He is a determined problem-solver, respected and resourceful leader and deserving inductee to the 2023 NWT Education Hall of Fame.



Morgan Tsetta/Dechinta Centre

Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning has transformed the way many NWT residents access and experience post-secondary education. For more than a decade, Dechinta has been delivering land-based university courses, and has become a national and international leader in Indigenous research and education. As such, it is also the 2023 Minister’s Choice inductee to the 2023 NWT Education Hall of Fame.

Based on Dene Laws, ethics and values, Dechinta’s leaders in education are the Land, Indigenous knowledge holders and land-users who are Dechinta's Bush Professors. While courses are taught by leading Indigenous academics, Indigenous knowledge, culture and language are at the core. The school’s academic and multi-generational cultural programs include language learning, harvesting, hunting, traditional skills and arts. Dechinta has hosted conferences, workshops and on-the-land experiences to roughly 18,000 participants and has supported numerous academic publications and local research.

Dechinta’s programming breaks down barriers, particularly for women and mothers, fostering a learning space where Indigenous learners, teachers and Elders feel comfortable. Dechinta has also worked hard to create low-barrier programming for members of the two-spirit and queer community, Indigenous youth and youth in care. Dechinta’s accredited courses are transferable to institutions across Canada. Its programs are adaptable, relevant and designed to support community needs, ranging from virtual workshops to multi-week camps.

Dechinta has made an indelible impact on education in the North. Through Dechinta’s innovative programming, learners of all ages can build strong

connections, work to create healthier, decolonized communities, and imagine new futures.



Colleen Eckert exemplifies leadership in education. Colleen has made immense contributions to education over 25 years through her work with the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association, Nunavut Teachers' Association, the NWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), and a decade of service to students, educators and small fly-in Arctic communities as a multi-grade school teacher.

As a professional development coordinator for many years at ECE, Colleen understood the positive impact a well-supported teacher would have on the growth and learning of northern students. She designed,

planned and delivered education and mentorship to teachers all across the NWT and Nunavut through numerous seminars, workshops, fairs and forums, including the New to the NWT Educators Conference (N2NEC). *'Colleen welcomed every new educator with open arms and heart, treating all new teachers, many of them just starting on their careers and far away from family and friends, with respect, humor, kindness, and compassion,'* a nomination letter read.

Colleen has a deep personal commitment to the critical role of Indigeneity in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 education and the need to decolonize education in the NWT. She was instrumental in ensuring that N2NEC conferences emphasized to new educators the importance of place-based learning, orienting themselves to their communities' culture, language and people, and prioritizing Indigenous pedagogies. A lifelong learner herself, Colleen's wholistic approach to professional development built successful and confident educators who were empowered to contribute respectfully and effectively in their classrooms, schools and communities.

Now retired, Colleen's positivity, patience, vast knowledge, mentorship and expertise are still missed by her colleagues in the North. Colleen's contributions to

northern education and communities have empowered and enriched the lives of countless students and educators. Through her work and volunteerism, Colleen has helped to build stronger northern schools and communities.