

New William J. Nelson ACE Award recognizes Calgary woman who masters co-operation

May 24, 2016 —An energetic leader within the Canadian and American co-operative movement will be the first recipient of the William J. Nelson Contribution to ACE Award recognizing those who add significant value to the Association of Cooperative Educators (ACE).



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Hazel Corcoran of Calgary, the executive director of the Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation, new board member of The Co-operators and vice president of Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada, the pan-Canadian association representing co-operatives and credit unions, will be honoured at an awards ceremony at the University of Calgary on June 2.

“Hazel pushed the envelope for us, and helped our organizations reach as many people as possible in Alberta,” says Sarah Pike, program chair for the 2016 conference between ACE and the Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation being held in Calgary. “She was especially effective in connecting with leaders who would contribute to the discussion of Energizing Communities: Co-operatives Nurturing Democratic Practices—our conference theme.”

Pike adds that Corcoran spearheaded the public Mark Goldblatt Inaugural Lecture on May 31 evening at Triwood Community Association pay tribute to the co-op housing leader’s memory. She is also welcoming up to 50 educators touring Prairie Sky Co-Housing Co-operative where she lives. In addition, Corcoran helped bring pivotal speakers on public policy to the conference.

“It’s apt that Hazel will be getting this award,” adds Pike. “William Nelson, the namesake of this trophy, has the same sort of passion for getting co-operation done.”

Corcoran who was born and schooled in the U.S. before beginning her career in Canada and becoming fluent in French, was also a director of le Conseil canadien de la coopération (1994-2005), Calgary Co-op (1999-2002), Prairie Sky Co-housing Co-op (2006-2012), and First Calgary Financial Credit Union (2007-2012). The William J. Nelson Award recognizes the recent CHS Foundation President who has been a backbone of ACE for many years. Nelson will be the keynote presenter on June 3 morning, speaking on “Transitions in Co-operative Education: An Incomplete Agenda for the Future.”

Joining Corcoran in accolades is Seth Leon, the Calgary-based manager of Co-operative Services for the Alberta Community and Co-operative Association. Leon will receive The William Hlushko Award to Young Cooperative Educators. He was involved in developing the Unleashing Local Capital Program to spur new co-op development and guiding economic changes in Indigenous communities. He volunteers in his community as a board member for Calgary Can, supporting recycling and economic opportunities, and CommunityWise Resource Centre that provides affordable meeting spaces. He is also participating in the Alt/

Now: Economic Inequality program for innovation in the social economy.

CASC, and the Association for Nonprofit and Social Economy Research will also recognize scholars and leaders in their organizations.

ACE unites co-operative researchers, educators, practitioners and developers in a single association serving, primarily but not exclusively, Canada, United States and the Caribbean. With beginnings that date to 1952, it has helped bridge geographic, cultural and language divides to share education about co-operation. For an agenda of the 2016 CASC-ACE Conference in Calgary, May 31-June 3, visit www.ace.coop/agenda-at-a-glance.

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