



## NEWS RELEASE

### **Arctic Inspiration Prize Announces 2015 Laureates**

*Three teams awarded share of \$1.5 million for plans that support the Canadian Arctic and its Peoples*

**Ottawa, January 27, 2016** – The fourth annual Arctic Inspiration Prize totalling \$1.5 million has been awarded to three teams for their knowledge to action plans that advance the health, wellness, and quality of life of Canada’s Northern peoples and communities: Better Hearing in Education for Northern Youth (BHENEY); Qaggiq: Nurturing the Arctic Performing Arts; and the Tri-Territorial Recreation Training (TRT) Project.

The laureates were announced at a ceremony held in Ottawa tonight that was attended by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, who participated in the presentation of the awards to the laureates.

**Better Hearing in Education for Northern Youth (BHENEY)**, was awarded \$300,000 for its plan to foster literacy and academic outcomes for youth living with hearing loss in the Qikiqtani Region of Nunavut. “It is much more difficult to learn when you cannot hear,” said Lynne McCurdy, an audiologist from Guelph, Ontario who will lead the BHENEY team of hearing health care professionals, educators, parents, and community leaders including Rotary Club members from the North and South. “We are thrilled to receive this support from the Arctic Inspiration Prize,” said McCurdy. “The funds, and the awareness that the Prize will generate, will have a huge impact on our plans to support the needs of children with hearing loss,” said McCurdy. The BHENEY project will include classroom-based sound amplification technology, professional development, training and support for educators, parents and the community.

**Qaggiq: Nurturing the Arctic Performing Arts**, was awarded \$600,000 to implement its plan to revitalize Arctic culture and the performing arts. “The Arctic Inspiration Prize arrives at a time when Arctic performing arts are at risk of being lost or never realized,” said Team Leader Ellen Hamilton, of the Qaggiavuut Society in Iqaluit, Nunavut. “This award will help create stronger programs for northern artists, who nurture culture and through their creativity, provide a sense of identity for northern youth.” Qaggiq represents a diverse team of northern performing artists, educators and arts administrators from across the Arctic, with support from arts organizations in southern Canada including the National Arts Centre, The Banff Centre, National Theatre School of Canada, and the Canada Council for the Arts. The Qaggiq team has developed a coordinated strategy that includes artist mapping, artist and teacher training, collaborative performance, mentorship and youth programming.

The **Tri-Territorial Recreation Training (TRT) Project** received \$600,000 for its plan to develop and deliver a specialized community recreation leadership training program in rural and remote communities across Canada's three territories. The TRT team, led by Anne Morgan from the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY), is comprised of a skilled and diverse group of non-profit, government and private sector organizations from the field of recreation including the NWT Recreation and Parks Association (NWTRPA), Nunavut Recreation and Parks Association (RPAN), Campus for Communities and the governments of all three territories. "Recreation has the power to improve community health, wellbeing and quality of life," said Morgan. "This Prize will allow the TRT team to enhance and strengthen the capacity of recreation leaders in northern communities, while building a supportive network of those able to improve opportunities for children, youth and adults in the Canadian Arctic to participate in recreation."

The awards ceremony, hosted by Peter Mansbridge, featured a performance by Tanya Tagaq, Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory, Christine Duncan and Nunavut Sivuniksavut. In addition to the financial award, the laureates were presented with artwork created by sculptor Adamie Anautak from Akulivik, Nunavik, Dakh'l'awèdí carver Calvin Morberg from Whitehorse, Yukon, and copper sculptor Brian Walker from Whitehorse, Yukon.

In congratulating the 2015 laureates, AIP co-founder Arnold Witzig said, "The strength of the nominations received by the Arctic Inspiration Prize, and the support the teams have received, exemplifies the significance of the Prize. Not only does the AIP support innovative, sustainable, multi-disciplinary projects that will have long-term positive impacts in Arctic communities, it builds partnerships and enriches collaboration among diverse groups in the North and South."

For more information, please visit <http://www.arcticinspirationprize.ca/>

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### **About the Arctic Inspiration Prize**

Founded in 2012 by Arnold Witzig and Sima Sharifi, the AIP recognizes and promotes the extraordinary contribution made by diverse teams in the gathering of Arctic knowledge, and their plans to implement this knowledge to real world applications for the benefit of the Canadian Arctic, Arctic Peoples, and therefore Canada as a whole. To-date, 11 teams have been awarded prizes totalling \$4.5 million.

The Arctic Inspiration Prize is managed by the [ArcticNet Network of Centres of Excellence](#) and made possible with contributions and support from dozens of other partners from the North and South.

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