

Marsha Early, a social worker at The Advocacy Centre in Nelson, is this year's recipient of the highly respected Bill McFarland Award for "outstanding devotion to the prevention of child abuse throughout her career and; Her lifelong efforts at work and in the community in the areas of child welfare and family preservation".

The Bill McFarland Award was established by BC Parents in Crisis Society (now Parent Support Services Society of BC) in 1997. Bill McFarland was an advocate for children throughout his life and social work career. His achievements include: founder of the Alberta Foster Parents Association, the National Federation of Youth in Care Networks, and Parent Support Services Society of BC. He was a member of the Berger Commission, a consultant to the Gove Inquiry, and a recognized expert on the Young Offenders Act. This award honours his memory and his tireless efforts for the care and welfare of all children.

Marsha Early was nominated for this award by her colleagues at The Advocacy Centre in Nelson who had many words of praise for Marsha's work and dedication to the safety of children, women and families throughout her career. "She was, and continues to be, one of the finest advocates for children and families in the Kootenays and a social worker with the highest of ethical standards." They went on to say that Marsha "always championed children yet remembered that parents were varied in their skills as well as in the obstacles and realities they faced".

Marsha was presented with the award at the recent AGM of the Ending Violence Association of BC held in Richmond. She received a standing ovation from fellow victim service workers from across the province. Tracy Porteous, Executive Director of EVA and seconder to the nomination had this to say: "Marsha Early's strong leadership comes from such a place of grace and quiet dignity. I and the 240 anti violence programs that are part of EVA BC are very fortunate to have had Marsha's wisdom, vision and calm!" Marsha has represented the West Kootenays on the Board of EVA BC for many years and most recently as the Co-Chair.

It became clear to the Bill McFarland Award Committee that Marsha exemplified the intent of the award. Parent Support Services President, Cheryl MacDonald reported "we are pleased to add Marsha Early's name to the prestigious list of former award recipients that includes: Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond; Joyce Preston; Delores Romano; BC Association of Family Resource Programs, and Fran Grunberg. Congratulations Marsha."

Marsha's co-workers told the Award Committee that she "takes risks and is willing to do what is hard for all the right reasons. We feel privileged to have worked with her and have been inspired by her passion and commitment to the work. There are many children and families in our community who have benefited from Marsha's dedication, skill, determination and caring.

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*Marsha Early  
2010 Recipient of the  
Bill McFarland Award*



*Carol Ross (to the left)  
presenting  
Bill McFarland Award to  
Marsha Early*