

The Governor General's Caring Canadian Award



Louise Morissette

Québec, Quebec

While working for the Commission des écoles catholiques de Québec (Québec Catholic School Board) in the 1980s, Louise Morissette discovered the importance of providing a good education for young children, particularly those from impoverished families.



In 1988, Ms. Morissette joined the Fondation Georgette-Lavallée, in Québec (now the Fondation Petits bonheurs d'école). Staffed mainly by women teachers and former pupils of the Marguerite-Bourgeoys School, the foundation had an important goal: to help children from poorer families gain access to a better education. Ms. Morissette joined the board of directors in 1990 and, a year later, became its president, a position she held for nine years.

As president, Ms. Morissette devoted many hours to helping the foundation operate efficiently by putting its finances on a solid footing, recruiting staff and taking part in bazaars to raise funds for the foundation. Thanks to her hard work and dedication, as well as that of her staff, the foundation expanded rapidly beyond its Lower Town roots to all other school boards in the region. Now, 23 years later, one hundred schools benefit from the foundation's help and almost 20 000 children have been given the skills they need to follow their dreams.

This isn't the only way Ms. Morissette has shown a sense of community. In 1994, she created le Courier des jeunes, a mail service for children. She developed the system and recruited volunteers to respond to letters from children, often writing many of the letters herself. Le Courier des jeunes now reaches a thousand kids a year, easing loneliness for many and helping children develop better writing skills.

Louise has also turned her attention to philanthropy. After 20 years as a member of the V'la l'Bon Vent choir, she recruited its former members to join le Chœur des Hivers, a choir that raises funds every Christmas for charity. "Wherever she has gone, Louise has proven to be a leader who inspires all those who know her," says Madeleine-Lyne Pigeon, who nominated Ms. Morissette for the award.

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Madeleine-Lyne Pigeon, nominator

But it is the work she has done for children for which she will be best remembered. "The many children she has helped will be better equipped to meet life's challenges," says Pigeon. "Like so many women, Louise has worked in the shadows, but with tenacity, perseverance and efficiency, bringing her creativity and intelligence to the service of young people."



The Caring Canadian Award was presented to Louise Morissette on April 17, 2012, at Rideau Hall. Sgt Ronald Duchesne 2012 © Rideau Hall