



News Release

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For Immediate Release

Silas Donham and Jenn Power of the L'Arche Community Named Co-Recipients of The Honourable Mayann Francis Faith in Action Award 2018

Halifax, NS – Silas Donham and Jenn Power of the L'Arche Community were named co-recipients of the Honourable Mayann Francis Faith in Action Award at an AST gala event on Friday evening. The Award honours exceptional community outreach that is recognized as having provided significant benefit to the wider community. Recipients are nominated based on various criteria including their religious commitment to the faith tradition to which they belong. AST also presented honourable mentions to Stephen B. Jewczyk, Barb Martell, and Beverley McDonald.

About Silas Donham and Jenn Power, Co-Recipients

Silas Donham and Jenn Power were nominated for this award as a team. Together, they embody a Christian life, bringing their individual strengths and talents to everyday life with people who have intellectual disabilities. Silas runs a work program at L'Arche Cape Breton, and Jenn is the Regional Leader for the L'Arche Atlantic Region. With a family that includes biological and adopted children, and children with and without disabilities, Jenn and Silas are raising their children to embody the L'Arche principles of inclusion, involvement, and intentional Christian community. They came separately to the L'Arche community as volunteers. Jen wanted to live intentionally in Christian community and to be in relationship with people with intellectual disabilities. Silas wanted to do something to make the world a better place. Eventually they became a couple. After university, they came to the L'Arche community to stay, feeling called to lives of service and living out their faith. Both have held various jobs within L'Arche, but their work lives are not easily distinguished from their personal lives. Everything they do is done from an intentional place to be a follower of Jesus. As described in a letter of support, Jenn and Silas are fierce advocates, loving parents, and change makers. They see strength in vulnerability. They share their talents, their time, and their treasure freely with others. They are generous and patient, and they do their best to make time for the most important “things” in their lives, which aren't things at all. To put it simply, they live their faith and put it into action every day.

Stephen B. Jewczyk (Honourable Mention)

Stephen Jewczyk has been involved with Stella's Circle, a social justice ministry of the United Church of Canada, in St. John's, NL, for 14 years. During that time, he has helped the organization to grow its programs and services in housing, counselling, and employment services, transforming lives of individuals who face many barriers, including mental illness, addictions, trauma, poverty, homelessness, criminal justice involvement, low literacy, and long periods of unemployment. He believes in the work of Stella's Circle, and most importantly, he believes in the individuals who seek help. Given the right kind of supports, respect, and dignity, individuals can thrive. Stephen's faith and commitment to helping others is what motivates him to continue the work he does.

Barbara Martell (Honourable Mention)

For the past 31 years, Barb Martell has worked at the Sacred Heart School of Halifax, in various capacities. Barb's work at the school has always been much more than a job, however. Her commitment to the school, its faculty and staff, and its students, is a Christian vocation. She gives with her whole heart, going far beyond the call of duty by offering extra time and energy wherever it is needed. Her faith forms the centre of her life and of her work, and based on the numerous letters of support received as part of her nomination, she puts her faith into action every day. She will be greatly missed as she enters her retirement years.

Beverley McDonald (Honourable Mention)

Beverley McDonald is an extraordinary leader in the areas of refugee and immigration. She discovered a calling, and gifts she wasn't even aware of, when she first became involved with refugees, some two decades ago. She relates with compassion, respect, and sensitivity to refugees, has advised sponsorship groups, and enabled advocacy on government policies. She works with a profound ecumenical spirit among her own United Church community and many other faith groups. She has made enormous contributions to the well-being of refugees and the capacity of sponsorship groups to work compassionately and respectfully with refugees.

Located on the Northwest Arm in Halifax, Nova Scotia, AST is recognized as one of the finest theological universities in North America, educating postgraduate students for the ethical and theological challenges of today's world.

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