

## **Eight 4-H Volunteers Recognized with Annual Award**

*Co-operators Volunteer Leader of the Year Award recognizes the efforts of 4-H volunteers across Canada*

OTTAWA, March 3, 2010- The Canadian 4-H Council today announced eight recipients of the 2009 Co-operators/4-H National Volunteer Leader of the Year Award, representing eight of the ten provinces across Canada.

Each winner received a \$100 gift, as well as Co-operators and 4-H products. In addition, one volunteer will be recognized as the grand prize winner with a \$1,000 prize, and receive a trip to the 4-H Annual Conference and General Meeting held in Ottawa in May, 2010.

“The National Volunteer Leader of the Year Award is a fantastic way to recognize the contributions of 4-H leaders in Canada,” said Judy Shaw, president of the Canadian 4-H Council. “Without the time and efforts of our more than 8,500 volunteers, 4-H would not be the strong and vibrant program that it is today.”

Collectively, the selected volunteers have close to 200 years of active involvement in 4-H.

Each winner was nominated by their respective 4-H members, who are asked to give examples on how their leader has made their community a better place, and why they deserve the Co-operators/4-H National Volunteer Leader of the Year Award.

“The commonality throughout all of the nominations was an extreme devotion to the 4-H program and to the 4-H Members,” Shaw continued. “This is consistent across the country, and we owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to 4-H volunteers throughout Canada.”

Volunteers are recognized annually by the Co-operators and the Canadian 4-H Council. Generally, one volunteer is selected from each province, with a grand prize winner selected from the group.

“As an organization that encourages and supports volunteerism, we are proud to recognize the significant contributions of this year’s recipients,” said Kathy Bardswick, president and CEO of The Co-operators. “What volunteers know is this: the gift is two-fold – the person volunteering often receives as much as those being helped. Congratulations to 4-H for a long history of instilling these values.”

The following volunteers were awarded the Co-operators/4-H National Volunteer Leader of the Year Award:

- Suzanne Skaaning, British Columbia
- Linda Halun, Alberta
- Alison Weaver, Saskatchewan
- Ellen Syme, Ontario
- Pierre Marcoux, Quebec
- Nancy K. Orr, Prince Edward Island
- George MacNeil, Nova Scotia (posthumous)
- Harold Surrect, New Brunswick

George MacNeil of Nova Scotia is being recognized posthumously for his contributions to the 4-H program. MacNeil was killed in a tragic automobile accident near his farm.

His presence in the 4-H program was far reaching in Nova Scotia and Canada. He recently wrote a song entitled “The 4-H Trail,” which he performed at the Canadian 4-H Council Annual Conference and General Meeting in 2009. As his club wrote, “We all miss him.”

Pierre Marcoux of St. Ferdinand, Quebec, was selected as the \$1,000 grand prize winner for the award, in recognition of his more than 25 years of volunteering with 4-H.

His club said that he plays a significant role in encouraging and mentoring the 4-H Members in his club. In addition, Marcoux helps out in any way he can during club activities, and he works hard to promote the 4-H program in the area.

The Canadian 4-H Council would like to thank all 4-H volunteers across Canada for their time, efforts and contributions to the 4-H program.

Applications are now being received for the 2010 award. More information about this and other programs can be found at [www.4-h-canada.ca/programs](http://www.4-h-canada.ca/programs).

### **About the Canadian 4-H Council**

One of the country’s longest-running and most respected youth organizations, 4-H offers fun, excitement and learning for youth in communities large and small across Canada. More than 8,500 trained volunteer leaders help 26,000 plus 4-H members to develop self-confidence and learn a wide variety of skills through hands-on project work.

### **About The Co-operators**

Based in Guelph, Ontario, The Co-operators is a group of Canadian companies that provide home, auto, life, group, travel, commercial and farm insurance, as well as investment products. The Co-operators Group Limited is a 100 per cent Canadian-owned co-operative with more than \$7 billion in assets. It is owned by a group of Canadian co-operatives, credit union centrals and like-minded organizations. It is well known for its community involvement, and is listed among the 50 Best Employers in Canada.

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