

## Betty Grigg Inclusive Education Award

The Betty Grigg Inclusive Education Award is presented to spotlight a southern Alberta school that displays outstanding inclusive practices in dealing with staff, students, families, and the community. It recognizes a culture of inclusion created through both leadership and action. It honours schools that find ways to make sure that all students have the support and opportunity to achieve their academic potential while enjoying full participation in all school activities with friends and classmates.

Almost 70 years ago, families of children with a developmental disability had a vision of a community that welcomed and included all people, today that vision lives at the heart of Inclusion Lethbridge. A big part of realizing that dream was knowing that all children should go to school with their siblings and kids from their own neighborhood. Children needed the chance to learn, play and grow with kids with disabilities. These students would become our communities and would better understand and value their fellow citizens for their ability and potential contribute to our lives and society.

Betty Grigg was one of those pioneering parents that lead the change in our communities and province. She was a well-known and respected for building awareness and networks within the community. Though a strong and relentless advocate, Betty was always dignified and gracious. Many of the families that are part of the Inclusion Lethbridge today thank Betty for her warm welcoming style of leadership. Betty was often on television and hosted a show called "Our Town". It was her connections in the media that brought disability issues to the forefront. The community became aware that for too long people with disabilities had been segregated from the community and in turn the community had been deprived of the opportunity to be enriched by the unique contributions of each citizen.

Children have had the right to go to their neighborhood schools since the 1970s but being present at a school did not mean being included. As more and more educators rose to the challenge to include students with disabilities, they discovered that all students did better in inclusive classrooms. The fight for inclusion is not always easy but it is always right. When Inclusion Lethbridge decided to recognize schools for their inclusive practices it made perfect sense to name the award in honour of Betty Grigg. Betty was a President and an active member of Inclusion Lethbridge for many years. She worked tirelessly with parents, schools, politicians and other stakeholders towards inclusive learning environments and communities. Many families that continue to advocate for (and have successful adult children as a result of) inclusive educational opportunities, were inspired Betty Grigg. Her legacy lives on in the hearts and minds of our community and in the schools that embrace the challenge of including all students in all activities of the school.

The Panel in charge of deciding the recipient of this award always has the challenge of choosing one school to spotlight from a rich field of nominations. The selection process is never an easy one and reminds us that there are many schools doing lots of great things towards

creating an inclusive learning environment. The panel looks for nomination information about schools that:

- Indicated a history and reputation of inclusive practices.
- Demonstrated value-based actions or policies that protect the child's right to be valued and included.
- Offered training, opportunity, information or education for staff and parents on inclusive practices and resources.
- Included specific examples of creative ways to include a student.
- Displayed a high standard of behavior towards families and children who have relied on the school to share their vision and value for inclusion.

Nominations and supporting information can be from the following sources: Family/Parent, Student, Parent Committee, Professional (social worker, case worker), Principal and Teacher/Teaching Assistant, School Board members.

The Betty Grigg Inclusive Education Award has been given to the following schools:

- 2005/2006: General Stewart School (Lethbridge Public School Division 51)
- 2006/2007: Coalhurst Elementary School (Palliser Schools)
- 2007/2008: Dr. Gerald Probe School (Lethbridge Public School Division 51)
- 2008/2009: Taber Central School (Horizon Schools)
- 2009/2010: St. Paul School (Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Division #4)
- 2010/2011: Galbraith Elementary (Lethbridge Public School Division 51)
- 2011/2012: Horizon School Division
- 2012/2013: Immanuel Christian High School
- 2013/2014: St. Patrick Elementary School
- 2014/2015: Dr. Gerald B. Probe Elementary School
- 2015/2016: G. S. Lakie Middle School
- 2017/2018: Children of St Martha School
- 2018/2019: Kainai High School
- 2021/2022: Catholic Central High School
- 2022/2023: Coalhurst High School
- 2023/2024: University of Lethbridge
- 2024/2025: Nicholas Sheran School

The Betty Grigg Inclusive Education Award is presented annually at the Inclusion Lethbridge Community Gala.