



Lieutenant Governor of Alberta

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## **News release**

September 26, 2014

# **Mental health and addiction trailblazers receive Lieutenant Governor's award**

Leaders on the mental health and addictions front are being honoured today with True Awards from the Lieutenant Governor's Circle on Mental Health and Addiction.

Lieutenant Governor Donald S. Ethell presented five awards for outstanding work to understand how mental illness and addiction develop, create approaches to help catch problems in early stages, offer supports for those who are suffering and break down stigmas that hold back individuals and society as a whole.

The 2014 True Award recipients are:

### **True Grit - Kaj Korvela (Calgary)**

Kaj is Executive Director of the Organization for Bipolar Affective Disorders and a respected leader in peer support and mental health education and awareness. Kaj uses his own experiences to motivate, inspire and change attitudes for the better. He has worked to ensure the mental health needs of Calgarians with Bipolar Disorder are met and has recently begun work to develop support groups in other Alberta centres.

### **True Compassion - Dr. Joe Cloutier (Edmonton)**

Dr. Joe Cloutier grew up in Toronto's inner city. He co-founded and is director of the Inner City Youth Development Association and Inner City High School. Joe is principal of the school and has spent over 20 years working in Edmonton's inner city with high risk youth many of whom are suffering from addictions, mental health problems, homelessness and the psychological impact of poverty.

### **True Service – Critical Incident Peer Support Program, AB Environment & Sustainable Resource Development (various locations)**

The only program of its kind in the Alberta Public Service, the initiative sees some 40 volunteers with training in the process of emotional defusing reach out to support co-workers who have experienced critical incidents on the job, such as aircraft incidents, wildlife attacks and fatalities/serious injuries. The program provides timely support for staff and fosters overall awareness of mental health issues.

### **True Leadership – The Norlien Foundation (Calgary)**

The Norlien Foundation is a leader in understanding the role that early experiences and brain development play in well-being and human development. Leading Foundation programs include the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative which works to improve health and wellness outcomes for all Alberta children and families with a focus on strengthening mental health and preventing addiction.

## **True Imagination - The Canadian Institute of Natural & Integrative Medicine (Calgary)**

The Institute is focused on developing and delivering innovative resiliency building programs that empower people to better manage life's challenges. This includes *Breathing Room*, a Mount Royal University pilot program of online mental health resources to help students detect warning signs when they are struggling and maintain good mental health.

### **About the Circle**

The Lieutenant Governor's Circle is dedicated to reducing stigma related to mental illness and addiction, furthering public knowledge of the topic, and giving hope and comfort to those affected by letting them know that they are not alone. For more information visit [www.lgcirclealberta.ca](http://www.lgcirclealberta.ca).

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