
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Nov. 19, 2016

Ministry of International Trade and Responsible for Asia
Pacific Strategy and Multiculturalism

B.C. multicultural champions honoured during awards ceremony

VANCOUVER – Five B.C. multicultural champions were recognized Nov. 18, 2016, before friends, family and their peers at the seventh British Columbia Multicultural Awards. The awards recognize British Columbians whose exceptional work helps bring diverse cultures together by embracing diversity and promoting multiculturalism.

This year's award recipients used the arts to break down barriers and unite communities. They partnered with dozens of organizations throughout the province to allow children and youth to develop an understanding of the importance of multiculturalism, respect for diversity, acceptance and inclusion; helped to deliver an innovative public awareness media campaign aimed at challenging racism and hatred; and built meaningful opportunities for immigrant newcomers to fully participate in all aspects of British Columbia society.

Government received 146 nominations for awards in five categories: individual, organization, business, youth and multicultural excellence in government. Nominees selected for an award are chosen by a panel of judges with expertise in multiculturalism and anti-racism.

The 2016 British Columbia Multicultural Award recipients:

- **Individual:** Paulina Grainger
- **Organization:** Equitas - International Centre for Human Rights Education
- **Business:** Williams Lake Tribune
- **Youth:** Chitha Manoranjan
- **Government:** BC Housing

All award recipients receive a trophy and those selected in the first four categories noted above also receive \$5,000 to be donated to a non-profit organization of their choice to further support the work of multiculturalism in the province.

The event is organized by the Government of British Columbia with advice and support from the Province's Multicultural Advisory Council (MAC).

Quotes:

Teresa Wat, Minister of International Trade and Minister Responsible for Asia Pacific Strategy and Multiculturalism –

"I am honoured to congratulate the recipients and nominees of this year's British Columbia Multicultural Awards. The passion and commitment demonstrated by these exceptional British Columbians promotes cross-cultural understanding, respect, and inclusion in our workplaces and in communities in every corner of the province."

Multicultural Advisory Council chair Tenzin Khangsar –

“Each British Columbia Multicultural Award nominee is a role model in their respective field and we can all learn from their achievements. I hope that this recognition spurs others throughout B.C. to look for creative and innovative ways to become multicultural champions in their own communities.”

Quick Facts:

- Since 1988, B.C.'s Multicultural Advisory Council has promoted cross-cultural understanding and respect throughout the province.
- B.C. welcomes nearly 40,000 new immigrants every year.
- Almost 30% of British Columbians have emigrated from another country in their lifetime and one-quarter of the people in the province are self-identified visible minorities.
- In 2015, the B.C. government will provide nearly \$1.7 million to engage cultural groups, to fight racism and discrimination and to promote multiculturalism.

Learn More:

British Columbia Multicultural Awards:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/celebrating-british-columbia/honours-and-awards/bc-multicultural-awards>

B.C. Multicultural Advisory Council:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/multiculturalism-anti-racism/multiculturalism/mac>

A backgrounder follows.

Media Contact:

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BACKGROUND

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2016 British Columbia Multicultural Awards recipients

Individual Award: Paulina Grainger

Grainger is an arts administrator, actor-producer and a storyteller who creates innovative projects that use film, photography, movement, storytelling, theatre and mask work to bring the immigrant and refugee experience to life. Currently with the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, she is committed to telling the stories of newcomers while continuing to challenge and deepen the community's learning and understanding of diversity and multiculturalism in Canada.

Award Donation: Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria

Funds will be directed toward innovative youth arts-based programs at the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria.

Organization Award: Equitas - International Centre for Human Rights Education

Equitas partners with over 80 B.C. community organizations, municipalities, schools and public institutions in 18 communities throughout the province to deliver training, coaching and educational tools and resources that build the capacity of partner organizations to integrate human-rights based activities into their own programs, particularly as they relate to children and youth.

Award Donation: Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House

The awarded funds will be used to further Equitas' established partnership with Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House to support recently arrived Syrian refugee children and families and reinforce promotion of multiculturalism.

Business Award: Williams Lake Tribune

The Williams Lake Tribune worked in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association - Cariboo Chilcotin branch to deliver the Dirty Laundry Campaign, an anti-racism media strategy directed at challenging stereotypes and raising cultural awareness. The campaign depicted people who have experienced racism wearing t-shirts emblazoned with a variety of slogans including "I was not expected to succeed" and "Racism stops with me".

Award Donation: Canadian Mental Health Association - Cariboo Chilcotin branch

The Canadian Mental Health Association - Cariboo Chilcotin branch will use the money to further its multiculturalism projects and continue to offer innovative programs, campaigns, workshops and events that challenge racism and spread the message of acceptance and diversity.

Youth Award: Chitha Manoranjan

Manoranjan's multicultural and intercultural work has often focused on diverse initiatives and

youth-led practices directed toward advancing multiculturalism to support truly inclusive cross cultural societies. He currently works with the North Shore Immigrant Inclusion Partnership, a coalition of community agencies and institutions dedicated to improving settlement outcomes for immigrant newcomers to Vancouver's North Shore community.

Award Donation: Renfrew-Collingwood Food Security Institute

The award money will be applied towards an intercultural learning exchange/cultural-development project with youth from a variety of backgrounds. To further advance intercultural connections, youth will create and publish a book that reflects on their relationships to food, their culture, and the local food system.

Government Award: BC Housing

The organization's commitment to multiculturalism is reflected not only in its policies, but in training and events provided to employees, scope of client services offered in the community, and partnerships with organizations throughout the province. Examples include housing and support for immigrants and refugees through its housing registry and rent subsidy programs; its partnership with the Immigrant Services Society of BC to build a new facility that will include one-stop housing and support services for refugees; and the annual Multiculturalism Day celebration involving over 300 BC Housing employees at regional office locations.

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