



FOR RELEASE

June 9, 2014

## **Commissioner recognizes exemplary action, dedicated volunteers and talented youth**

WHITEHORSE—Commissioner Doug Phillips presented awards for volunteer service and for exemplary action on June 7th at the annual Commissioner's Tea in Dawson City. Phillips also hosted young musicians who performed in a Youth Showcase.

"It's no secret that Yukoners go the distance to help one another. I was honoured to present awards to such deserving individuals," Phillips said. "Dedicated volunteers, people of action and young artists serve as role models and help our communities thrive."

Kevin Blanchard of Dawson was awarded the Commissioner's Certificate of Exemplary Action. Blanchard was recognized for rescuing a man who was drowning in the Yukon River in the summer of 2013. The individual had fallen off the Moosehide dock and was quickly pulled under by the current; Blanchard was able to pull the man from the river.

Karen McKay and Vicki Roberts from Dawson City alongside Mark Icton and Rick Smith of Whitehorse received the Commissioner's Award for Public Volunteer Service. These recipients were being honoured for their integral volunteer work with community organizations, events, boards and auxiliaries.

Premier Darrell Pasloski and his wife Tammie were in attendance.

The Commissioner's Youth Showcase highlights young artists and musicians by giving them an opportunity to perform or have their artwork displayed at commissioner's events. This year the North Klondyke Highway Music Society Youth Fiddlers from Dawson City performed at the Tea; Whitehorse residents Alexis Gee and Maria Peters performed at the Tea and later at the Commissioner's Ball.

The Commissioner's Tea is an annual public event in Dawson City co-hosted by Parks Canada and IODE Canada. The Commissioner's Ball is held at the Palace Grand Theatre each summer in celebration of Yukon's birthday.

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List of spring 2014 recipients below.

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## **Commissioner's Award recipients**

### **Certificate of Exemplary Action**

Kevin Blanchard (Dawson City) – Blanchard is being recognized for rescuing a man who was drowning in the Yukon River during the summer of 2013. The individual had fallen off the Moosehide dock and was quickly pulled under by the current. Blanchard ran down to the dock and was able to haul the man from the river.

### **Public Volunteer Service**

Karen McKay (Dawson City) – McKay is a long-standing volunteer to the benefit of many organizations and events in the community, including the Yukon Gold Panning Championships, the Yukon River Quest, the Commissioner's Tea and Ball, the Dawson City International Short Film Festival, the Yukon Quest, the Percy deWolfe Memorial Mail Race, and many more.

Mark Icton (Whitehorse) – As the longest-serving City of Whitehorse volunteer, Icton has provided over 40 years of service with the Whitehorse Fire Department.

Rick Smith (Whitehorse) – Smith has given years of committed volunteerism to the benefit of Whitehorse communities, specifically: Auxiliary Constable with RCMP in Whitehorse for 12 years; President of the Auxiliary Police Association of Yukon; board member of the Child Development Centre since 2000; advisory committee member on the 2010 Yukon Police Force Review; board member of the Yukon Law Foundation since 2007.

Vicki Roberts (Dawson City) – Roberts has provided 17 years of integral volunteer service at the McDonald Lodge in Dawson City. Her commitment has included organizing and calling the weekly bingo game, picking up seniors from outside the facility to take part in the game and delivering them home afterwards. In addition to organizing yard and bake sales, Roberts routinely visits with residents to take them out for walks, play cards and do puzzles.

### **Commissioner's Youth Showcase Participants**

Maria Peters (Whitehorse, YT): At 16 years of age, Peters is currently in grade nine with the Royal Conservatory of Music. Peters, who loves playing duets and quartets, travelled to Halifax last summer to participate in a quartet teaching demonstration at the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers conference.

Alexis Gee (Whitehorse, YT): Gee, currently a grade 10 student, began studying piano at the age of six. Gee is currently in grade nine piano at the Royal Conservatory of Music; she loves learning ensemble work and new pieces.

The North Klondyke Highway Music Society Youth Fiddlers (Dawson City): The society members study fiddle together and perform at local coffeehouses and community concerts.

**Playing at the Tea only.**

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