



SASW Distinguished Service Award Recipient Linda Rudachyk, RSW (SK), Weyburn

Linda was born in Norquay, Saskatchewan and grew up in Arabella where her parents ran the General Store and Post Office. Her parents instilled in each of their offspring the values of their Ukrainian heritage and community involvement was a part of life. Linda tells this story of how she found her way to Social Work. *"When I was about 10 years old, Social Workers from Yorkton came to apprehend the five children of our hired man and his wife. My parents had to be involved with the court process and I was fascinated. I decided that I wanted to be a Social Worker when I grew up!"*

Linda began her career in Social Work when she was hired by the legendary Dorothy Moore as a Juvenile Probation Officer for the Department of Social Services in Weyburn. Linda worked in a variety of positions in family services. She developed a Parenting Partners Program and was active in foster parent training and provincial and federal community consultation work for Young Offenders and Child Welfare. Linda became involved in sexual abuse investigations and over the years she focused more on community education and development around the issue of child abuse. In 1985, Linda developed the Family Support Program for southeast Saskatchewan. In 1987, Linda 'retired' from the department. As it turned out, this was the beginning of what would be Linda's most important work.

Linda was a founding member of the Weyburn and Area Council on Child Abuse. **As a presenter at the International Conference of Child Abuse Prevention in Toronto in 1989, Linda helped establish Weyburn as one of five 'Caring Communities' in Canada.** She had a vision of a community that would welcome children and had a 'dream' of creating an all-encompassing community family support centre. This dream materialized in 1995 with the opening of the Family Place, a nationally recognized community-based and community-funded resource centre with programs serving children and families. The Family Place provides a wide array of programs that are open to anyone who comes through their doors. The children and families are met with welcoming smiles and more often than not, a warm hug. As the Family Place evolved, Linda developed the Mini-Go preschool program for three to five year old children and Tiny-Go for two-year-olds. These programs provide a structured, nurturing and stimulating early learning environment for children at risk and assist families who have children with handicaps, late development, behavior disorders, autism and self-esteem and social development issues. To keep these programs up and running, Linda has worked tirelessly organizing and working at countless creative fundraising events.

Linda has received a number of awards in recognition of her outstanding contributions. These include:

- In 1999, she was named 'Hometown Hero' by the Weyburn Review.
- In 2001, she was the first recipient of the Women of the Year Weyburn Quota International Community Service Award.
- In 2005, she was named 'Hometown Hero' on the CBC Radio 'Gallery In The Summer.'
- In 2006, she was presented with the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal
- Also in 2006, she received the 'Golden Spike' Weybex Award from the Weyburn Chamber of Commerce for her contribution to community service.
- In 2009, she was presented with the 'Champion of Children' Award by the Saskatoon Preschool Foundation for her pioneering work with at-risk pre-school children.
- Also in 2009, she received the Paul Harris Fellowship Award from the Weyburn Rotary Club.
- On November 17, 2009, Linda received our Province's highest honour, the Order of Merit from Lieutenant-Governor Gordon Barnhart.

Linda is a very generous, approachable and down-to-earth person with an infectious laugh and an irrepressible sense of humour. Throughout her career, Linda has been an advocate and an outspoken champion for children and families locally, provincially and nationally. Linda's vision of how things could be coupled with her hard work and determination has allowed her to achieve great things. Linda has touched the lives of many people. I will leave the last words to Linda who recently wrote:

"I have always been very proud to say 'I am a Social Worker' and I have loved my work. How many people can say, after 34 years, 'I have never had a boring work day!' and 'I still LOVE my profession with passion!' How Blessed I have been!"

Linda lives in Weyburn with her husband, Greg and daughter Cassie, in grade 4. Older daughter, Susan is completing her first year of Pediatrics Residency in Halifax, Nova Scotia.