



## **NEWS RELEASE** – For Immediate Release Monday, October 21, 2013

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### **FCSS Director and County Councillor Receive Provincial FCSSAA Awards**

Today, the Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FSCCAA) announced that County of Grande Prairie FCSS Director Kathleen Turner, who has worked with the County's program for 24 years, and Mary Ann Eckstrom, involved in FCSS locally and provincially over her past 18 years as County Councillor, are recipients of two of the Association's six Achievement Awards.

Turner is the sole recipient of the Association's 2013 Lifetime Achievement Award for her dedication and numerous local and provincial accomplishments throughout more than two decades with the FCSS program. Eckstrom, one of five recipients of the Award of Merit, served on the executive with the provincial association, including four years as president, and has chaired the County's FCSS Advisory Committee since her first year as County Councillor in 1995.

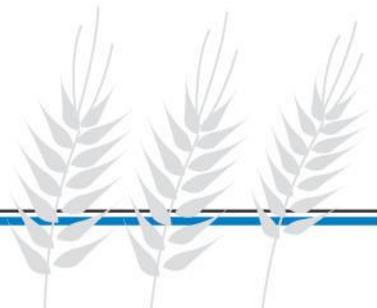
"Kathleen has dedicated the majority of her working life to FCSS and is a champion for helping those of all ages in our communities improve their quality of life," says Leanne Beaupre, County Reeve. "She is highly respected both locally and provincially for her leadership, expertise and sheer commitment that she brings to FCSS across the province.

"It is through her guidance and vision that many initiatives and programs have grown or been implemented, and partnerships have been created."

Adds Reeve Beaupre regarding Eckstrom's award: "Since her first year as a County Councillor, Mary Ann's support and dedication for the County and the province's FCSS programs have been immense. She has actively lobbied for FCSS, and has been a key player in raising the profile of FCSS and the influence of local FCSS programs within their own communities.

"As a County Council member, Mary Ann was a constant advocate for the social well-being of our residents, and her input and perspectives will be missed."

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The FCSS Achievement Awards Program recognizes leaders in FCSS across the province for their outstanding contribution to FCSS locally and provincially.

The Lifetime Achievement Award honours an individual who has made a significant contribution to FCSS through long service and considerable professional and personal involvement to FCSS on a provincial level.

The Award of Merit recognizes individuals for their spirit and dedication to strengthening the social fabric of the community through a demonstrated commitment to improving preventive social programs and services.

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**BACKGROUNDER**  
**Kathleen Turner**  
**FCSSAA Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient 2013**

For the past 24 years, Kathleen Turner, Director of the County's FCSS program, has been committed to FCSS on a local and provincial level. She was first hired to the County's FCSS program as a Community School Liaison worker, and has served as FCSS Co-Director since 1997 and as Director since 2000.

The program initially had three full time employees - two school liaison workers and the director - plus casual staff in the home support and playschool programs. Over the years, the program has grown to five school liaison workers, a home support coordinator, two community programmers, three admin assistants, six seasonal playschool instructors, two program facilitators, approximately 20 casual home support workers, three librarians and three casual library staff.

Turner has been involved in, or led the implementation of various programs, has been part of the School Community Team Management Committee, is part of the Critical Response Team, and has created partnerships with other organizations and FCSS programs. She was instrumental in establishing a SHIFT community of practice with the Family Violence Prevention Network. As well, she took a leadership role in the development and construction of the Wellington Resource Centre - a partnership between the County of Grande Prairie and the Peace Wapiti School District.

Given Turner's experience and reputation, she is seen as a mentor and support person for new directors across the Northwest Region. She has partnered with other local FCSS programs to support their operations, oversees and manages an FCSS program contract with the Town of Beaverlodge, administers contracts with Town of Wembley and Village of Hythe to operate their home support programs and will often take a leadership role to organize meetings and training for local FCSS programs.

Turner has established a regional partnership between FCSS programs to respond to disasters and works closely with the City of Grande Prairie's coordinator. She is also the Library Administrator for the library board, which consists of three member libraries and partnerships with five neighboring libraries.

At the provincial level, Turner was elected by the Directors Network as a representative to the Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSSAA) Board in 2002 and served three years (one as secretary). In 2011, she was elected as the Co-Chair of the Directors Network.

**BACKGROUNDER**  
**Mary Ann Eckstrom**  
**FCSSAA Award of Merit Recipient 2013**

County of Grande Prairie Councillor Mary Ann Eckstrom became involved with FCSS at the local level when she was elected to the County of Grande Prairie Council in 1995. That same year, she was named Chairperson of the County's Family and Community Support Services Advisory Board and has served in that role until her retirement from County Council.

She was elected the regional representative to the Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSSAA) Board in 1995, and in 2005, was elected as president. She served four years as president, one year as past president and another year as regional representative until 2011.

During her tenure as president, Eckstrom lobbied and advocated on behalf of all FCSS programs across the province regardless of their location or size. She sat on the Provincial Affordable Housing Task Force to deal with homelessness, to help ensure all Albertans had access to proper and adequate housing. She encouraged provincial MLAs' understanding of and support for FCSS and the collective impact preventive programming has on the lives of Albertans.

Eckstrom will retire from the County of Grande Prairie Council on October 21, 2013 after 18 years serving as County Councillor.