



Karen MacKinnon (middle) receiving her award from Marion MacLellan (left) and Madonna MacDonald (right).

Karen MacKinnon, Nutritionist, Public Health Received the Nova Scotia Public Health Champion Award 2012

When nominating Karen MacKinnon for this award, Anne Gosse, Public Health Nurse and co-worker, wrote: "Karen exemplifies the true meaning of champion, *one that does battle for another's rights or honor* (Websters Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary)." Anne added that, when talking to people about Karen's contributions, a common thread to the conversations was, "that it was great to see Karen being acknowledged for the hard work she does. The word 'deserving' came up many times."

The award is given for innovation, commitment and leadership. In her ten years with GASHA, Karen has demonstrated her abilities in all three areas. Her contribution to the School Community Gardening Project at Chedabucto Place School in Guysborough is one example. She supported the project from its early stages to this year where each student took home produce from the garden and a recipe booklet put together by Karen and her intern. This project won the "Mobius Award of Environmental Excellence" in 2012.

Karen is a founding member of the Antigonish Food Security Coalition where she has taken a leadership role. Colleen Cameron, also a member of the coalition, notes, "Karen has an amazing ability to work across partnerships. She is genuine in her approach, values all people and is able to engage with diverse groups. I know she is a great mentor, taking dietetic interns and involving them in meaningful learning experiences in the community."

Karen has been instrumental in many other initiatives throughout the district including community kitchens, healthy eating policies, and GASHA's Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI); as well as, supporting community health planning with GASHA's Community Health Boards (CHBs).

When she received the award, Karen said, "I was very surprised by the award. I try to work with people in the community to make a difference. I really love this work. I feel in a way this represents the work many of us do. I really appreciated receiving this award."

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