

The Winners

School–Community Relations Awards



The Grade 9 students at Namao School wrote thousands of positive messages on Post-it notes and placed them throughout the school to surprise younger students!

**Recognizing Alberta schools and teachers for
excellence in school–community relations**



**The Alberta
Teachers' Association**

The Winners

Introduction

The Alberta Teachers' Association places a high value on effective communications and meaningful relationships between schools and the communities they serve. To recognize excellence in this area, the Association offers the School–Community Relations Awards. Awards are presented to a public, separate or francophone school and to an Alberta teacher for effective and innovative school–community relations. *The Winners* honours recipients of the School–Community Relations Awards.

ATA School–Community Relations Awards

The ATA's School–Community Relations Awards program recognizes schools and teachers for building excellent community relations.

Public Education: The Heart of Our Communities



Students at Namao School, in Namao, give a thumbs-up to the school's "Celebrating Diversity" project, which won this year's School–Community Relations award.

A school with ties to its community that go back 126 years and a teacher who spearheaded charitable projects are the 2010/11 award of excellence winners in the Alberta Teachers' Association School–Community Relations Awards.

Established in 1885, **Namao School**, Namao, has a long-standing relationship with its community. Currently, the school provides kindergarten to Grade 9 education for more than 375 students.

In 2010/11, the school adopted the theme "Celebrating Diversity," with a focus on planning and organizing activities to highlight the diversity within the school and community. The program was supported by lesson plans, guest speakers, student projects and numerous activities, such as wheelchair basketball and sledge hockey.

Grade 9 student Charleigh Kondas says, "This year has been more than life-changing." Kondas was involved in a Grade 9 activity where students wrote thousands of positive messages on Post-it notes and placed them throughout

the school to surprise younger students. They also made an award-winning video about the activity (view the video at MyAlbertaSchool.ca).

"This project displays how we are all unique, yet perfect," says Kondas. "Our differences, imperfections and hardships make us who we are."

Parent Carrla Cowley is impressed that her son attends a school that "encourages students to love themselves, treat others with respect and look at the world in a positive way."

School staff are pleased with the project's success. Teacher Thomas Holmes says this year's program galvanized support in the community. Principal Vernice Pollmann is proud of the students' knowledge, empathy and caring, "We all have something to offer our school and each other."

The judges commented: "Great letters of support." "Liked the wheelchair obstacle course." "This program deserves full marks—it's amazing!" They also commended Namao School for its use of Google Analytics to measure the program's success.





As part of his award-winning project, “Five Days of Service to Christ,” Russ Snoble, a religious education consultant for Grande Prairie Catholic School District, coordinated a district-wide food drive.

Russ Snoble, a religious education consultant for Grande Prairie Catholic School District, is the award of excellence winner in the teacher category. Paul Sévigny, president of Grande Prairie and District Catholic Teachers Local No. 42, nominated Snoble for his project, Five Days of Service to Christ.

Snoble asked staff, students and parents to help others over a five-day period, with each day of service based on a specific theme: clothing, education, shelter, food and faith.

Sévigny provided examples of the project’s success in the form of a newspaper clipping showing students at St. Mary School with more than 60 bags of groceries for the local food bank in Beaverlodge. An article from *Embrace the Spirit*, the ATA’s Religious and Moral Education Council’s journal, discussed how students and staff across the district raised \$20,000 to help students whose parents cannot afford school fees, fieldtrips, sports equipment and eyeglasses.

Henri Chauvet, principal of École St. Gérard in Grande Prairie, says Snoble’s project brought the entire community together. “All of our families, Catholic or not, worked together to bring happiness to local charities and families in need. For our students, these five days of service created a sense of ownership and civic responsibility.”

“The response to the project has been overwhelming,” says Snoble. “Our biggest challenge is how to follow up next year. So many people are telling us they don’t want to look back—but how can we do more than we did this year? What a great challenge and opportunity to face!”

The judges said that Snoble’s goals and objectives were communicated clearly. They found the project innovative and creative, and were pleased to see supporting documents, such as letters of support, news releases, news articles and a partnership with the local radio station.

In addition to the awards of excellence, Arlene Purcell, of Coalhurst High School, received a merit award in the teacher category, and the following schools received merit awards in the school category: G.R. Davis Elementary School, Fort Macleod; Lochearn School, Rocky Mountain House; Sheldon Coates Elementary School, Grande Cache; A. Blair McPherson School, Edmonton; École Mountain View School, Hinton; and Colonel Macleod School, Calgary.



Award-winning school inspires its community

Bon Accord Community School wins ATA's school–community PR award

A school's inspired idea has proven to be both healing and enlightening and a winner with the province's teachers.

Bon Accord Community School is the recipient of the 2009/10 Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) School–Community Public Relations award for "Raising Student Awareness of Cancer and Its Impact on All of Us."

The school's participation in local cancer fundraising events touched the lives of students, teachers and community members and, in particular, Betty McWilliams, Bon Accord Community School's principal, who is on medical leave from the school.

"When I was told that the Parent Support Society was sponsoring a team in the Relay for Life in my name, it touched my soul," McWilliams said. "It challenged me to heal quickly after my second operation so I could come down and give the teams my personal support and thanks. When I saw the luminaries [candle lights] with my name and got many, many hugs, I was again lifted to the heavens with support. Then to find out that this tiny school had raised more than \$13,000 to fight cancer ... I was overwhelmed. This school has inspired its community."



"This project was a great success, a success that has motivated us to try to do even better next year."

—Darryl Propp



Darryl Propp, acting principal, explained in the school's submission that the project demonstrates the difference that a school can make in and out of the classroom. The initial objectives of the project were to increase student awareness of the effect of cancer and to communicate students' fundraising efforts to the community. Propp noted that staff involvement, donations and communication with media became subsequent objectives as interest in the project increased.

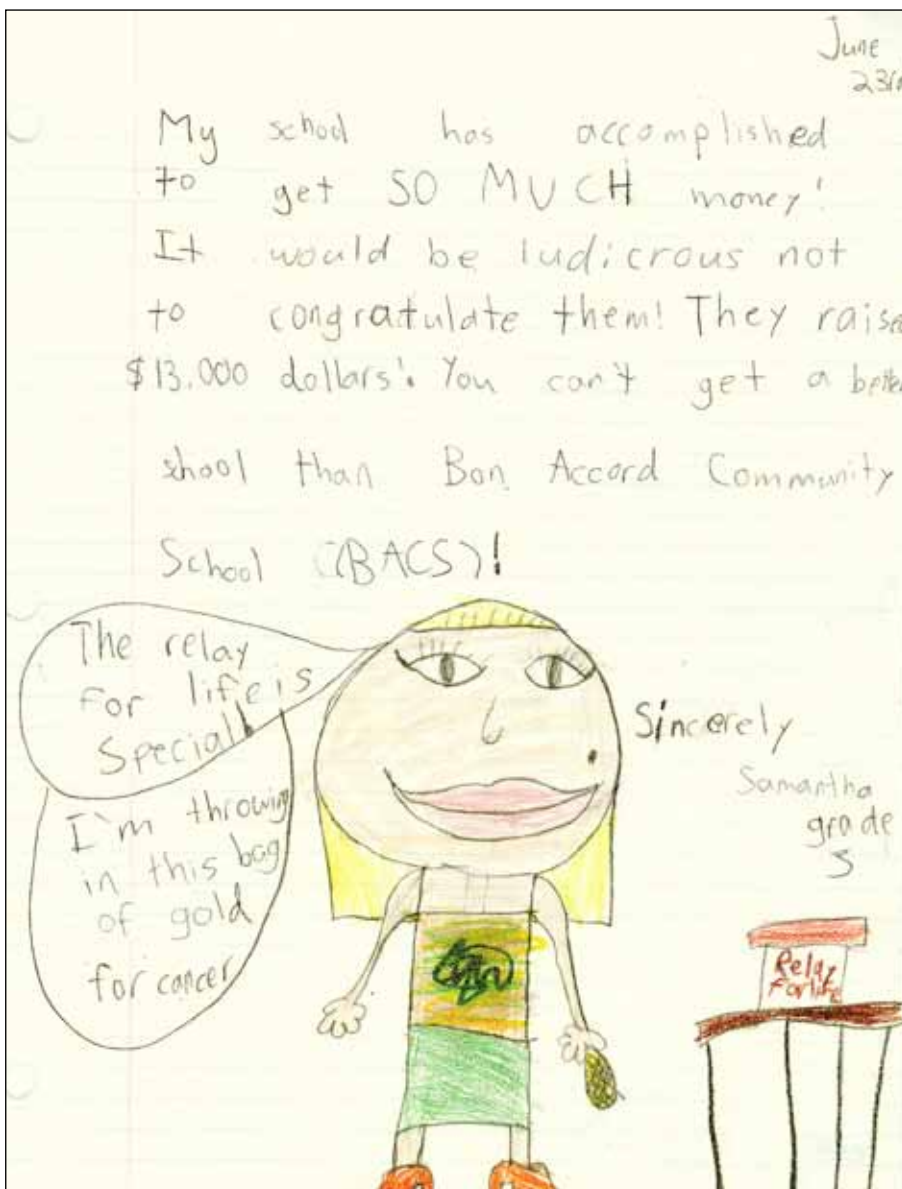
To raise student awareness and understanding of cancer, the school participated in the Terry Fox Run, Coins for Cancer and Relay for Life. Students walked or ran the same distance that Terry Fox covered during his run. The school held an assembly, and a representative from the Terry Fox Foundation talked to students about cancer. Coins for Cancer involved a weekly walk through the school, with stations set up for students to make donations as they walked by. For the Relay for Life,

teachers participated in an overnight, non-competitive relay.

The school kept the community informed through notices, e-mails, media and the school's website. In turn, many community members and representatives from local businesses dropped by the school to make donations.

"This project was a great success," acknowledged Propp, "a success that has motivated us to try to do even better next year."

The School-Community Public Relations Awards competition is sponsored annually by the ATA to recognize excellence in public relations.



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—Betty McWilliams



Sturgeon School Division sweeps awards

“The Hair Massacure is a great cause. Two of my children participated this year and not only did they help to raise awareness within their school and community but they learned that even though they are young kids, they can make a difference. Within the last few weeks, since shaving their heads, when they go out people often stare or make comments and this has made them realize what sick kids may have to deal with daily. The cause not only helped others but taught them something about themselves and this can only benefit our community.”

—Joanne Woodger, parent

Sturgeon Heights School, in St. Albert, and Thomas Holmes, a teacher at Sturgeon Composite High School, in Namao, are this year’s recipients of the ATA’s School–Community Public Relations Awards.

Judges selected Sturgeon Heights School for the School Award of Excellence and named Thomas Holmes as the recipient of the Teacher Award of Excellence. The awards recognize excellence in public relations.

A “powerful learning” experience

School Award of Excellence: Sturgeon Heights School

The staff, students, parents and volunteers at Sturgeon Heights School regularly participate in school–community events. School principal Garnet Goertzen believes that the time when schools could focus completely on curriculum has passed. “The three Rs today,” said Goertzen, “include relationships, responsibility and resiliency. A school community needs to pull together regularly and engage in projects and activities that can replace what may be missing in the lives of youth. Activities that demonstrate citizenship and community create opportunities to involve students in causes that enrich the lives of others.”

The school’s main PR event was the Hair Massacure. Project leaders Amy Sydlowski and Collette Hartmetz organized volunteers, pledges, advertisements, media and a hot lunch fundraiser. They coordinated the sale of candy canes, pink hair dye, hair extensions and T-shirts.

As well as raising more than \$19,000 for the Stollery Children’s Hospital and the Make-a-Wish Foundation, the Hair Massacure, as Goertzen observed, “is a good example of the camaraderie and sense of teamwork that comes out of a multi-aged group of children and the community when they pull together. It’s remarkable. You probably needed to be here to appreciate it, but let me tell you that kids, community and parents working together results in powerful learning.”

Judges said the submission demonstrated clear objectives that helped reach a concrete goal. “Great work. The students and staff at Sturgeon Heights School should be proud,” wrote the judges.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STURGEON HEIGHTS SCHOOL

“Hi, I’m Ella. I did the Hair Massacure with Auntie Laurie. She had cancer and hasn’t had it since then. I can’t imagine having to go through the physical pain of numerous needles and chills every moment of the day. Then there would be the mental pain of waking up and seeing my hair on the pillow. . . . Now she is living her life to the fullest and never regrets anything. When I got my hair cut off I realized what cancer felt like on a small scale.”

—Ella Coyes, Grade 6



“My name is Cole Woodger. This year was my first time I took part in the Hair Massacure. I raised money for people who had cancer. My Grandpa had cancer. I had fun taking part. I want to do the Hair Massacure again next year.”

—Cole Woodger, Grade 4



Teacher's passion and commitment honoured

Teacher Award of Excellence: Thomas Holmes

The Teacher Award of Excellence recognized Thomas Holmes, of Sturgeon Composite High School, for his work with students, educational stakeholders and the community.

His contributions included organizing teams of teachers for the Relay for Life and the *Edmonton Journal* Games, creating the Sturgeon Teachers' Wellness Fund for community members in need, initiating a local scholarship fund for Sturgeon graduating students going into education, working to increase awareness about mental health issues, and coordinating student presentations to service groups to foster working partnerships for work experience students.

Sherri Devolder, a colleague at Sturgeon Composite High School, nominated Holmes for the award. In her nomination she wrote, "I truly believe that this award is what Thomas Holmes is all about. He dreams big and makes the dreams a reality. . . . I am not sure where he finds the time to come up with and implement so many great things for our teachers, students and community."

Sturgeon ATA local president Paul Froese agreed with Devolder: "Thomas has brought a new level of passion and community engagement that our members have never before witnessed. His enthusiasm and charisma are infectious. Thomas is a born leader."

The judges commended Devolder for assembling the submission and congratulated Holmes on his impressive work and dedication.

Schools receive Awards of Merit

Judges recommended that the following schools receive Awards of Merit: Beacon Hill School, in Fort McMurray; Bon Accord Community School, in Bon Accord; Henry Wise Wood High School, in Calgary; St. Michael's School, in Pincher Creek; and Spirit of the North Community School, in High Level.

The School-Community Public Relations Awards competition is sponsored annually by the Alberta Teachers' Association to recognize excellence in public relations.

Thomas Holmes, winner in the teacher category for community involvement

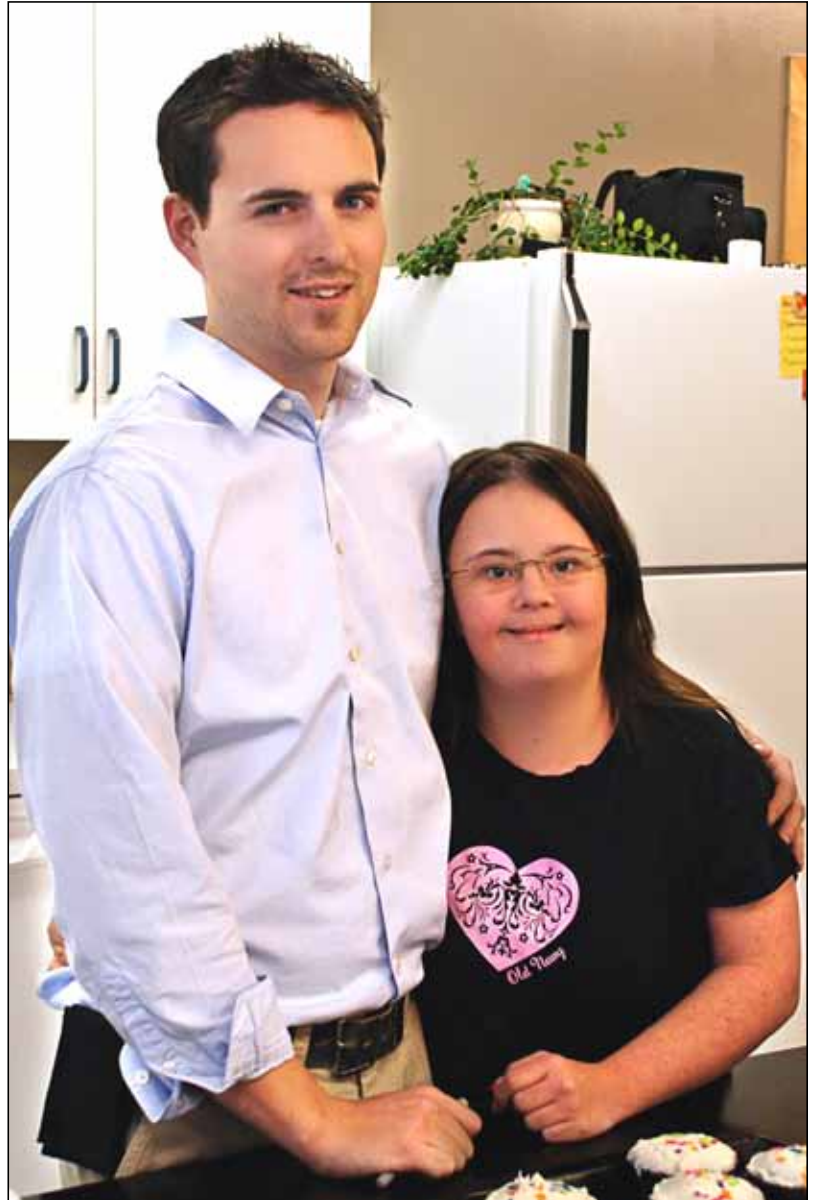


PHOTO COURTESY OF MAXINE FERGUSON

"This picture was taken after one of our class presentations. Courtney (right) visited CALM classrooms with me and helped teach sign language to the students as part of our presentation on challenging attitudes toward people with disabilities. Courtney also visited the Fort Saskatchewan Rotary Club for our presentation on the relaxation room."

—Thomas Holmes



Griffin Park School helps students learn the value of giving

“Living to Learn, Learning to Live,” a project of Griffin Park School, in Brooks, is the recipient of this year’s Award of Excellence—an honour bestowed annually by the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) as part of its School–Community Public Relations Awards program.

Two years ago, staff at Griffin Park School adopted the motto “Living to Learn, Learning to Live” to enhance the school’s mission to instill the virtues of lifelong learning and help students be respectful and caring members of society.

Students volunteer at the local food bank, create Valentine’s Day cards for residents in nursing homes and supported living homes, decorate liquor bags with “Don’t Drink and Drive” messages at Christmas, participate in community clean-up days, deliver handmade cards to long-term care patients at the local hospital, decorate placemats and shopping bags for local grocery stores and restaurants, participate in a “Pink Day” to stop bullying and stand up for universal inclusion, raise money for charities, sponsor families in need at Christmas, report school activities on a local radio station, and host a community picnic.



Grade 3 students delivered smiles, hugs, a song and handmade valentines to the elderly on February 14, 2008.

Mark Crozier, principal of Griffin Park School, says staff and students at the school are thrilled about the award. “Recognition like this helps keep up the enthusiasm. Community involvement isn’t really new to Griffin Park School,” Crozier adds. “For example, the school has been donating canned goods to the local food bank for many years. The difference this year is that some of our Grade 6 students now actually volunteer at the food bank, too. We’re trying to be cre-

ative about how we link community involvement with character education.”

One example of the way the school gets its messages out creatively is when students read the school news on the local radio station every week. As part of the news broadcast, the students discuss their virtue and character education theme for the week and read a quote that demonstrates the virtue addressed.

Staff at the school look for ways to add consistency to the messages they



teach. The school has just partnered with five organizations to put together a volunteer trade show in the gym during parent–teacher interviews. “Our goal is to expose students and parents to the many volunteer opportunities in the community that will help our students become well-rounded caring citizens,” Crozier says.

Judges said that the project was noteworthy, commenting: “What an impressive project! At Griffin Park School students are learning the value of giving to others both inside and outside of school time.” “It is obvious why such initiatives are an integral part of students’ lives—the teachers and staff are committed to such learning. Students and society are the beneficiaries.”

In addition to bestowing the Award of Excellence, the judges awarded Gibbons School an Award of Merit.

The School–Community Public Relations Awards competition is sponsored annually by the ATA. Entry information is sent to schools in the fall each year and posted on the Association’s website (www.teachers.ab.ca).



Students and parents explore local community volunteer opportunities at Griffin Park’s first ever volunteer expo.



Students pose with shoeboxes of toys collected for children in developing nations. The children are wearing poppies and dressed formally to support the school’s annual Remembrance Day ceremony.



School–Community PR Awards of Excellence Winners

Year	Category	Name	Location
2010/11	School	Namao School	Namao
2010/11	Teacher	Russ Snoble	Grande Prairie
2009/10	School	BonAccord Community School	Bon Accord
2008/09	School	Sturgeon Heights School	St Albert
	Teacher	Thomas Holmes	Namao
2007/08	School	Griffin Park School	Brooks
2006/07	School	Queen Elizabeth High School	Edmonton
2005/06	School	Jasper Junior/Senior High School	Jasper
	Teacher	David Stewart	Manning
2004/05	School	Catholic Central High School	Lethbridge
2003/04	School	Warner Hockey School	Warner
2002/03	School	Fox Run School	Sylvan Lake
2001/02	School	Delburne Centralized School	Delburne
	Teacher	Margaret Epoch	Niton
2000/01	School	M. E. LaZerte High School	Edmonton
	Teacher	Dave Blemings	Ralston
1999/00	School	Laurier Heights School	Edmonton
	Teacher	Judy Rieu	Sunset House
1998/99	School	Drumheller High School	Drumheller
	Teacher	Dale Gullekson	Sherwood Park
1997/98	School	St. Jerome School	Edmonton
	School	École Dr. Bernard Brosseau	Bonnyville
	Teacher	Mary-Ellen Perley-Waugh	Edmonton
1996/97	School	Blackie School	Blackie
	School	Thickwood Heights School	Fort McMurray
	Teacher	Irene Bodnar	Calgary
1995/96	School	Ernest Manning High School	Calgary
	Teacher	Dawn Sundell	Edmonton
1994/95	School	John Wilson Elementary School	Innisfail
	School	Rundle School	Edmonton
	Teacher	Sharon Goerg	Camrose
1993/94	School	Grande Cache Community High School	Grande Cache
	School	Van Horne Senior High School	Calgary
1992/93	School	C. J. Schurter School	Slave Lake
	Teacher	Bonnie Larsen	Canmore
1991/92	School	Chester Ronning School	Camrose
	Teacher	Irwin Warkentin	Vauxhall
1990/91	School	Brooks Composite High School	Brooks
	School	Harry Ainlay Composite High	Edmonton
	Teacher	Shirly McNeill	Edmonton
1989/90	School	Bishop Carroll High School	Calgary
	Teacher	Anna Nancy Lega	Grasslands
1988/89	School	Ponoka Junior High School	Ponoka
	Teacher	Pat Sokolosky	Calgary
1987/88	School	Peter Pond School	Fort McMurray
	Teacher	Roger Nelson	Strathmore
1986/87	School	Father J. A. Turcotte School	Fort McMurray
1985/86	School	Dickinsfield Neighbourhood School	Fort McMurray
1984/85	School	Dickinsfield Neighbourhood School	Fort McMurray

Copies of the winning submissions are available in the ATA Library. For additional information, contact Jonathan Teghtmeyer by e-mail at jonathan.teghtmeyer@ata.ab.ca or by phone at 1-800-232-7208, ext 477.

2011/12 School–Community Relations Awards

The School–Community Relations Awards competition is sponsored annually by the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) to recognize schools and teachers who excel in building relationships and making contributions to their community.

Categories

The School Award of Excellence is open to any public, separate or francophone school in Alberta that has effectively executed a program to build meaningful relationships with the community it serves. Winners of this award will receive an engraved plaque and a \$300 honorarium.

The Teacher Award of Excellence is open to a teacher working in a public, separate or francophone school who has effectively executed a program to build meaningful relationships with the community in which he or she teaches. Winners of this award will receive a \$250 honorarium.

Merit Awards may be awarded by the judges for up to 10 additional submissions deemed worthy. Winners of this award will receive a \$25 gift certificate from Chapters/Indigo.

Judging

Entries are judged by an independent panel of communications professionals who base their decisions on the following criteria:

- Scope of activities
- Contributions to the community
- Value of activities to students
- Evidence of imagination and innovation
- Presentation of materials

Application Process

1. Applications may be made by schools, teachers, school councils or community members.
2. Submissions should take into consideration the judging criteria and include (a) a competition entry form, (b) goals and objectives of the program, (c) an outline of the activities undertaken, (d) benefits to students, (e) contributions to the community, (f) samples of support materials and/or relevant photography, and (g) letters of support/commendation.
3. Applications must be received on or before March 2, 2012.
4. The ATA reserves the right to reproduce and publish copies of project materials submitted in support of an application unless otherwise stated.

2011/12 School–Community Relations Awards

Competition Entry Form

Please check ONE only:

School Award: Name of Project Leader: _____

OR

Teacher Award: Name of Teacher: _____

School Information:

School _____

Address _____

Town/City _____

Postal Code _____

Telephone _____

Contact information of person submitting award:

Name _____

Organization (if applicable) _____

Address _____

Town/City _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____

Entries must be submitted by March 2, 2012, to

Jonathan Tegtmeyer
The Alberta Teachers' Association
11010 142 Street NW
Edmonton, Alberta T5N 2R1