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For Immediate Release

Merkuratsuk and Flowers named first recipients of Inuttitut and Cultural Preservations Recognition Awards

The Department of Language, Culture and Tourism is pleased to announce Maria Merkuratsuk and Nicholas Flowers are the first recipients of the newly created Inuttitut and Cultural Preservations Recognition Awards.

These awards, which will be awarded annually, acknowledge people who are committed to preserving the Inuttitut language and Inuit culture within Nunatsiavut.

“Maria and Nicholas showcase their language and culture every day, and actively share their knowledge and skills with others,” said Shirley Jararuse, Language Program Coordinator. “We are thrilled to be acknowledging Maria as the first recipient of our Cultural Award, and Nicholas as the recipient of our first-ever Inuttitut Award.”

The Inuttitut and Cultural Preservations Recognition Awards were open to nominations of a community role model aged 15 or older. Recipients will receive a monetary prize of \$1,000 and a plaque which will be presented at a later date.

Biographies of recipients

Maria Merkuratsuk

Maria grew up on the land with her parents and siblings. She loves to take people to her cabin to show them the land and things that her parents taught her. Maria has a lot of knowledge of traditional skills and sewing and is always willing to pass along what she knows. She volunteers/works in her hometown of Nain with different organizations offering on-the-land based programs, and often shares her lived experience with participants.

Nicholas Flowers

Nicholas’s interest in learning Inuttitut started when he was in high school. He goes out into his community of Hopedale to speak Inuttitut to community members and Inuttitut teachers, and even visits elders to learn from them. Nicholas recently moved to Iqaluit to complete the Aurniarvik Program with the Pirurvik Centre to learn Inuttitut as a second language. He took what he learned from Pirurvik and aided the Nunatsiavut Government by instructing Inuttitut online adult classes with the assistance of his sister, Vanessa. Nicholas volunteers to teach cultural projects at the Amos Comenius Memorial School in Hopedale and is active in the Moravian Inuttitut Church Choir.