

## **The Florence Riske Caregiver Award 2014**

Good afternoon. My name is Gilaine Porter and I am chairman of the Pigeon Lake Child and Family Society. Our society was incorporated in 2001 by a group of committed community members who wanted to make some positive changes in our region. We have a few of our board members with us this afternoon and I would like to introduce them to you. Marion Neldner, Mary Ellen Herman, Cheryl McKerral, Christine McFarland and Linda Zukiwski.

Our society believes that strong families build strong communities. In defining family, we strive to strengthen the value of children, youth, parents, and our elders as vital members of a healthy and vibrant community.

In addition to our existing programs, we initiated a new recognition program in 2007, the Florence Riske caregiver award. We felt that in our busy lives and with the hustle and bustle of daily living, society as a whole has not given the deserved recognition to caregivers. Most of us know of exceptional people who give of themselves to look after the needs of others with total dedication and love.

Florence Riske was one of those special individuals who cared for her severely handicapped son Melvin since his birth. We lost Florence in December 2009 at the age of 92. Melvin at the age of 71 passed away in 2010. Until we lost them, they were both still living in their home in Ponoka. They will be both dearly missed and we are proud to annually give the Florence Riske Caregiver Award to a deserving member of our community or region.

This year it is our honour to recognize Carol Kakoschke. Carol lives in the Falun area and has been caring for Sandra Kardash for 15 years. Sandra had taught school at Falun for 23 years. One year after she retired she took a bad fall and was in the hospital for 3 months. When she came home everything was very new for her. She realised that she needed Home Care and that is when she met Carol. Carol was working for home care in 1999 and in early 2001 Sandra came into the program. Carol and Sandra became friends right away. When FCSS took over the caregiver program Carol decided to leave Home Care and look after Sandra on her own. A few years later, Sandra's housekeeper left and Carol assisted in keeping up her housekeeping along with taking Sandra into Wetaskiwin to visit her mother. Sandra's mother ended up living with her from 2006 – 2013 until she went into Wetaskiwin in long term care. Sandra being very independent wanted to live alone. So

they learned together how to make it work so that Sandra was able to live in her own home and be as independent as possible. Currently Carol organizes additional support to come in and help Sandra, but if Sandra needs assistance throughout the night or early in the morning Carol is there within a few minutes.

Carol is married to her husband Irwin and they both live on an acreage in the Falun area. They have 2 daughters, Carmen who is married to Allen, and Laurisa who I was told still lives at home but her heart is in Germany. Carol is very involved in her church and runs the Sunday school program. Along with that she enjoys singing, playing the piano, organ and accordion. She also told me that she loves gardening and her flower garden. I think we could say that Carol is the definition of one busy lady.

The board members of Pigeon Lake Child and Family Society feel that Carol Kakoschke truly deserves these awards and recognition. I would like to invite Duane Riske, our board members, Carol and Sandra to come up at this time for the awards presentation.