



2023 Recipient Response by Kat Hartwig

BC Achievement Community Award, Mitchell Awardee
May 10, 2023 • Government House, Victoria, BC

Your Honour, fellow recipients, and wonderful guests. We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, on whose traditional territory we are visiting today.

I am grateful to be here, and it is a distinct privilege to speak on behalf of my fellow award recipients whose stories and achievements are both uplifting and inspiring. It has been heartwarming to learn about the commitment, kindness, and vision embodied in the work of the award recipients.

It can feel as though this remarkable work is eclipsed by the seemingly insurmountable challenges facing society today -- so celebrating our successes through the BC Achievement Community Award helps to bolster our fortitude to carry on.

My parents immigrated to this country after World War II and I grew up on our family ranch near Invermere where my bond with nature was firmly established. I have been privileged enough to find a path of work in environmental and water stewardship. This work has been deeply rewarding despite the overwhelming sense of urgency to address the climate and the biodiversity crises we have put ourselves in.

Fortunately, we also find ourselves in a long overdue era of applied Reconciliation, where we have been given another chance to heal relationships with the original people of this land. Perhaps through this process we will learn how to cultivate more respectful relationships with the land and the water that we ultimately all depend upon.

So, in service to our communities and by mentoring applied optimism for our young people, we may rejoice in the collective action we all strive to inspire. Today we celebrate work that addresses inclusion, accessibility, equity, health, and creativity, for the most vulnerable in our Province. From Masset to Salmo, from Victoria to Lillooet, from Surrey, Richmond, Delta, Vancouver, Burnaby, Bowen Island to Ashcroft and Brisco.

To quote Tao Yuanming, a Chinese poet born over 1,600 years ago: "Though I am different from you, we were born involved in one another, not by any means can we escape the intimate sharing of good and ill."

The BC Achievement Community Award program provides the space for us to gather, share and celebrate the "good" with our families and friends, and inspires achievement. Thank you.