

## **Minister's Award for Compassion in Teaching**

**Recipients 2024**

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**Lesley Castella**

**Guidance Counsellor  
Larkhall Academy**

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Lesley Castella's exceptional compassion in teaching at Larkhall Academy has made a profound difference in supporting the social, emotional, and mental health of her school community.

Her commitment to social and emotional learning is evident in her development of responsive counseling programs, guided by Restorative Justice principles, which provide essential support to students in need.

Furthermore, Lesley's leadership shines through her initiative in creating crisis management protocols, ensuring that the school remains a safe and nurturing space for all. By employing inclusive and equitable practices, she has cultivated an environment where every individual feels valued and respected.

Her compassionate approach continues to positively impact the lives of students, families, and colleagues alike.

**Sean Kennedy**

**Science/French Teacher  
St. Paul's Junior High School**

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At St. Paul's Junior High, the extraordinary compassion exhibited by Sean Kennedy in his teaching has left a lasting impact on the school community.

Sean's dedication to social and emotional learning and mental health is evident in his personalized teaching methods, designed to ensure that every student comprehends and excels.

As a leader within the student leadership program, he demonstrates proactive leadership by organizing inclusive school activities and fundraisers, actively involving students in enhancing community engagement.

In his classroom, Sean promotes social interaction by pairing desks and ensures equitable participation in group activities.

In his commitment to the well-being and academic success of his students, Sean's efforts distinguish him as an exemplary model of compassion in teaching at St. Paul's Junior High.

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**S. Nicole McLean**

**Vice Principal with Teaching Duties  
Amos Comenius Memorial School**

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At Amos Comenius Memorial School, Nicole's extraordinary compassion in teaching has left an indelible mark on the community.

Through her leadership in the Gender and Sexuality alliance and dedication to fostering inclusive environments, Nicole has forged meaningful relationships and partnerships that advocate for diversity and support across all grade levels.

Her innovative teaching practices not only promote academic success but also prioritize the development of social-emotional skills, ensuring a nurturing and supportive environment for every student to thrive.

Nicole's commitment to compassion in teaching has significantly contributed to the positive culture of learning at Amos Comenius Memorial School. By advocating for social-emotional learning and promoting inclusive practices, she has created an atmosphere where students feel valued and supported.

**Stacey Luscombe**

**Grade 2 Teacher  
AP Low Primary School**

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At AP Low Primary School, Stacey Luscombe's extraordinary compassion in teaching has profoundly enriched the school community.

She champions inclusive projects like the Lead Learning Project, where her Grade 3 class learned American Sign Language to create a welcoming environment for deaf and hard of hearing students.

Stacey's commitment to supporting social-emotional learning and mental health is evident through her continuous learning of American Sign Language and her efforts to integrate inclusive lessons and resources into her teaching.

She demonstrates leadership by coordinating with a diverse team across Atlantic Canada to ensure her students have access to educational opportunities, bridging communication gaps through her simultaneous signing and teaching.

Her dedication extends beyond the classroom through open communication with families and continuous support meetings, fostering a sense of inclusion and belonging among all students.