

## 2018 GLOBAL CITIZEN AWARD



Marcella Pedersen

**M**ARCELLA PEDERSEN has been an activist all her life. She has been nominated for this award in recognition of her decades of international solidarity work through Development & Peace. However, she has been deeply involved with several organizations that intersect with international and local justice including the National Farmers' Union (NFU), and the Catholic Women's League (CWL). Particularly remarkable, is that Marcella has stepped up to take on leadership roles within these

organizations, and has also done the hard work at the grassroots level. She has had a major impact in all of the organizations that she works with, in part by promoting action campaigns among her different communities, further enriching the campaigns of the other organizations in her network.

With a background in farming and as a reflexologist, Marcella is very concerned about farm security and food sovereignty as it relates to health. Marcella is married to Gilbert, her husband of 46 years, with whom she has two children, Yens and Karen, and two grandchildren. In 2009, Marcella and Gilbert joined the North Saskatchewan River Environmental Society in a struggle to stop nuclear development and to encourage conservation and wind and solar energy. For 30 years, they have lived in a passive solar heated home. In 2010 they installed four wind turbines on their farm and solar panels for heating the honey house.

## A Conversation with Saskatchewan's Global Citizens...



education or through the result of suffering. Because of that, my focus has been on education and alleviating suffering via Development and Peace, the National Farmers Union and Catholic Women's League, and by financially supporting other justice-based organizations.

From Associated Country Women of the World Conference, a woman in the ladies washroom from Trinidad taught me to not waste water. She was on the floor crying her heart out when I asked her what was wrong. When she saw women brushing their teeth with a full stream of beautiful clear clean water running full blast from the taps, she became overwhelmed emotionally, and commented, that she carried every drop of water that her family uses.

**What is one way that you try to work for sustainable solutions to global challenges?**

Ecological resilience is probably my focus. Promoting food sovereignty through sustainable cropping practices, such as gardening, saving seeds, mulching and protecting the soil rather than mining it. Currently I live in a passive

**What does Global Citizenship mean to you?**

Global citizenship means supporting and standing in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world, not only with financial support but also human resources. I agree with all of Mark Bigland Pritchard's statement: "A global citizen is someone who can look beyond the needs of their own community, their own country or their own ethnic group and feel a connection with their fellow human beings worldwide. Global citizenship requires the protection of and care for the living world in all its diversity. Humans are part of the large web of life and are dependent on it."



**What do you feel are some of the biggest challenges currently facing our global community? What do you identify as possible solutions to these challenges?**

Climate change, food sovereignty, and concentration of economic power in fewer and fewer hands. Promising solutions are using renewable energy and increasing peasant or small scale farming (i.e. limiting large scale farming), treating the land with dignity (soil mulching). Solidarity of peoples standing up against economic powers has had some measure of success regarding trade deals and influencing corporate responsibility.

**Where do you find your inspiration? Tell us about a teacher, mentor, or other role-model who really made a difference in your life.**

As a preteen I was sexually abused, and I have often wondered if that has influenced my drive to always fight for or stand in solidarity with the underdog. At 16, through the National Farmers Union's youth camp, I learned the

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“power of one”! Also through my work in the NFU, I was encouraged to never give up. Through the church, I have learned about faith, hope and love and the power of forgiveness.

Through Development & Peace, via Father Harvey Valle, I learned the difference in actions between charity and social justice, and from Pope John Paul II, I learned that you can't have peace without justice. Through Professor Chris



Lynd, I learned to question our own beliefs and practices that lead us to see two possibilities of action: competition vs. cooperation. Whereas competition leads to indifference and then to domination, cooperation leads to compassion and then to solidarity. Through the peace movement in Saskatoon, I learned that you can only change people through

solar heated house and use train travel as much as possible when traveling across Canada.

As a promoter of letter writing, I often say to people: "If you haven't written a letter to your government representative this week, why haven't you?" There are so many issues to cover today. ♦