Marie Slark and Patricia Seth: Tanis Does Award Winners 2015

Marie Slark and Patricia Seth were recognized as winners of the 2015 Tanis Doe award from the Canadian Disability Studies Association. This award honours an individual (or in this case, two individuals) who dare to "speak the unspeakable" in advancing the study and culture of disability, and who have enriched through research, teaching, or activism, the lives of Canadians with disabilities. This is the major award presented by the association, reserved for those who have devoted an entire life to disability rights and advocacy. Pat and Marie not only satisfy these criteria, they exemplify them, they live them. The award was presented to Pat and Marie at a large conference in Ottawa in summer 2015. This conference is called Congress and it gathers together academics and researchers from all over Canada and the world. Pat and Marie were also given the opportunity to speak at Congress, and their presentation focused not just on the work they had done in the class action lawsuit and settlement, but also all of the work that is still left to do in helping people to access funds and find support.

In the past, this award has gone exclusively to academics – university professors and researchers. So Pat and Marie’s recognition is also a powerful message that we find our most important leaders and teachers not only or even primarily in the classroom or in the academy – we find them where disabled people can organize together to fight injustice and to support one another.

Using their unique style of collaborative delivery, Pat and Marie used their presentation to ask tough questions of the audience: how will you support institutional survivors? How will you make sure this abuse and neglect doesn’t happen again?