



## THE INSPIRING SOCIAL WORKER OF THE YEAR AWARD

2026

Social work is a calling which requires practitioners to have a strong commitment to caring and social justice. Despite the tremendous pressure of limited resources and heavy workload, many dedicated social workers in British Columbia work hard, day in and day out, to fulfill their commitment to this calling. Among them, Paul Cheng, a social worker who immigrated to Canada from Hong Kong, dedicated himself to serve new immigrants, youth in care, street youth, people with addiction, and many others, in Hong Kong and Canada for over forty years. It is widely recognized by his colleagues, clients, students, and friends that Paul's genuine caring attitude, professional practice, and tireless personal efforts deeply touched and greatly inspired them. In memory of Paul, the Inspiring Social Worker of the Year Award has been established to recognize social workers in British Columbia whose professional and personal efforts and dedication to serving people from marginalized communities has inspired others to care and contribute to the promotion of social justice.

### THE AWARD

Upon the recommendation of an adjudication committee, one successful nominee each year will receive the Award and an honorarium of \$2,000.00 for sharing their experience at the Paul Cheng Memorial Lecture. The lecture will be in the first week of September (TBD) at the University of British Columbia, School of Social Work, Paul Cheng's Alma Mater. The presentation will be video recorded and uploaded to the School's website. It will also be linked to BCASW's website for a wider audience.

#### Nomination Criteria:

A nominee for the Inspiring Social Worker of the Year will:

- have formal social work training at the bachelor's level or above (not necessarily from Canada),
- practice social work within British Columbia,
- be a Registered Social Worker with the BC College of Social Workers or practice in an exempted position,
- demonstrate a strong commitment to social justice in work with marginalized populations,
- be recognized as a role model who inspires others.

#### Nomination and Adjudication Process:

Nominations will be received from **April 16 to July 16, 2026**. All nominations will be sent by email to [bcasw@bcasw.org](mailto:bcasw@bcasw.org) with the phrase **Inspiring Social Worker Award** in the subject line.

To nominate a candidate, please attach:

- a brief statement of consent signed by the nominee,
- 1-2 page CV of the nominee with contact information
- 2-3 page narrative summarizing the work by the nominee that demonstrates their commitment to social justice and how/who the nominee has inspired,
- two recommendation letters written with good knowledge of the work and inspirational influence of the nominee.

The Award is co-sponsored and organized by the British Columbia Association of Social Workers and the University of British Columbia, School of Social Work. The adjudication committee will be formed in April with two members from BCASW, two members from the UBC School of Social Work. Announcement of the winner will be made in early August.

Should you have any questions, please contact BCASW at [bcasw@bcasw.org](mailto:bcasw@bcasw.org) or Barbara Lee, Assistant Professor, UBC School of Social Work at [B.Lee@ubc.ca](mailto:B.Lee@ubc.ca).