

## Chris Curwin 2019 QILAK Award

Chris Curwin became a member of RASC NB in July 2012 and over the following year he participated in some outreach events with fellow members. From this exposure, and inspired by what he had read about John Dobson's sidewalk astronomy, he developed a serious case of Outreach Fever.

In 2014 Chris had enough confidence to perform outreach on his own. He started setting up his telescopes at a local beach on the Bay of Fundy near our Urban Star Park, offering views of the Sun by day and the Moon and planets in the evening. That year, in addition to assisting with other outreach in Saint John and at our Centre star parties, Chris organized 26 activities of his own. These included two visits to elementary schools and overall he reached 775 people. The next year his total was 28 events and nearly 1000 people, and in 2016 he organized 44 events for 2950 people.

Whereas people started looking for "that guy on the beach with a telescope," Chris started a Facebook page, *astrobythebay*, in 2016 to inform people when and where he was planning to set up. He would post pictures of the events, images through the eyepiece from his phone, information on astronomy in general, and events of the Centre and the local astronomy club. Through this Facebook page he began advertising our availability for astronomy outreach for schools, youth groups and general observing. This played a significant role in Centre outreach events increasing from a previous high of 114 in 2015, to 219 events in 2016 and 248 in 2017. In 2017, Chris organized 68 events and participated in approximately 30 others. In the first ten months of 2018 he has organized 56 events and participated in 17 others.

Of particular note in Chris's activities is a practice he started early in 2017, when he began broadcasting live feeds via Facebook with his phone attached to the eyepiece. Through this method, and at his own significant expense, people from around the world have enjoyed views of the Moon and planets that they would never have seen otherwise. Through 44 such events, nearly 40,000 people have joined the live broadcasts and many were able to have questions answered in real time. In addition, many tens of thousands have viewed posted recordings of the broadcasts.

It is with great pride that we submit this nomination of Chris Curwin for the RASC QILAK Award.

June MacDonald, RASC NB President

Paul Owen, RASC N.B. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President