



News Release

‘Turning advocacy into action’: Level Playing Field owner Darby Young Wins Western Legacy Award for Innovation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALGARY, Alta. – For Darby Lee Young, winning a Calgary Stampede Western Legacy Award holds special meaning.

After all, the Calgary Stampede is where the owner and founder of Level Playing Field got her start. A proud Calgarian, Young has been involved with “the greatest outdoor show on earth” for two decades, as both a volunteer and employee, giving her time to both the chuck wagon and next generation committees and working jobs that have ranged from the welcome gates to guest services.

She credits her time at the Calgary Stampede as helping her become the capable, confident and personable professional she is today. Now, she’s the type of leader who has created a Calgary-based company that is quickly becoming known for turning “accessibility into advocacy.” That’s how Young, and Level Playing Field, were described at the 12th annual Calgary Stampede Western Legacy Awards Gala.

It was at that celebration, held Thursday, Nov. 17 at the BMO Centre, that Young accepted a 2016 Western Legacy Award in the Innovation category. She is one of four recipients of these special awards, which “honour individuals and groups who have demonstrated significant achievement in promoting and preserving Western values to create a better community for all.”

Young said one of Level Playing Field’s primary goals is “to make Calgary the most accessible city in Canada.”

“We work with architects, designers, property managers – anyone who owns a space – to make sure it’s accessible,” Young explained in her nomination video for this year’s Western Legacy Awards.

“The biggest thing is breaking down barriers; making sure that everybody feels included,” Young said. “We want to have equal opportunity to get everyone through the main doors, and treated fairly.”



Young, who was born with mild cerebral palsy, applies her every-day lived experiences to coming up with unique and innovative solutions to making the world as accessible for everyone as possible.

“A huge thank-you to the Western Legacy Awards judging panel for this incredible honour,” Young said. “I will cherish this recognition from the Calgary Stampede for the rest of my life, and hope this will help my company shed more light on the importance of creating accessible spaces and places for all.”

Not only has she created Level Playing Field, which offers service not just in Calgary but across the country and continent, but Young has also offered up her expertise and knowledge as co-chair of the City of Calgary’s advisory committee on accessibility and has volunteered for numerous organizations, ranging from the Cerebral Palsy Association in Alberta to Hockey Canada, including events for Canada’s National Women’s Program and Canada’s National Sledge Hockey Team.

For more information on Young and Level Playing Field, please visit levelplayingfield.ca.

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About Level Playing Field

Level Playing Field is a consulting company that provides Universal Design solutions. We evaluate, develop and promote accessible and Universal Design for all urban environments including residential, commercial, recreational, as well as for concerts, festivals, conventions and other events. Our work manifests with the belief that all new and old environments, to the greatest extent possible, should be accessible by everyone regardless of their age, ability or circumstance. We promote the concept of Universal Design in both construction and manufacturing disciplines, through research, design assistance and training. Until you are in a situation where you are disabled, it is hard to imagine that getting around within a city is a challenge. Level Playing Field is here to help remove the barriers and make the world inclusive for all. Visit levelplayingfield.ca for more information.