**Michael Deunov’s Citation for the 2017 Kozeny Communitarian Award**

The Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) hereby recognizes Michael Deunov as the 2017 recipient of the Kozeny Communitarian Award, honoring the indomitable spirit of Geoph Kozeny, who devoted his adult life to creating community in the world.

Michael has lived in intentional community settings for the last 32 years at La Cité Écologique, the ecovillage he founded in 1984 at Ham-Nord, Quebec as an integrated educational project. In addition, in 2003 he founded a second community inspired by the first: La Cité Écologique of New Hampshire (located near Colebrook). Both are thriving today. The community in Quebec has around 100 members; the community in NH has about 40.

Inspired by the writings of Ivan Illich, A.S. Neill (of Summerhill fame), and Rudolph Steiner, Michael sought to create educational opportunities that closed the gap between intent and results, relying on the natural environment as the principal “classroom.”

In the spiritual realm, Michael was influenced by the philosophies of Rudolf Steiner, Peter Deunov and Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov. In his Universal School of Life Michael purposely explores the links between the spiritual and the scientific, encouraging students to develop themselves spiritually through an exploration of their inner life.

In 1983 Michael organized a summer camp for children near Ham-Nord where he could put into practice his educational ideas. It was such a resounding success that participants asked him to expand the camp into a year-round opportunity. The following year—with the help of students and their families—Michael did just that, laying the foundation for the ecovillage.

From the beginning, the school has been the dynamic center of the community. It has emphasized team building and collaboration among students, as well as parental involvement. The Universal School of Life covers primary education through secondary education, starting as soon after birth as possible (even as early as one month!). It focuses on and balances the three parts of each individual: the will, intellect, and heart.

Early on, Michael discovered that it worked well to give students the chance to operate businesses in which his guiding educational principles could be grounded. Thus, the community became known for its abundance of student-run businesses, including ones focused on organic farming, health services, ready-to-eat meals, a bakery, and forestry management. Michael’s particular genius was supporting young adults to become business executives, not just worker bees.

Inspired by Michael’s example, the community emphasizes quality of life and happiness above material acquisition. For decades Michael has infused the community with his love of life, boundless patience, and good humor. He also stands out for living by the values he espouses—something that many of us find challenging, despite our best intentions.

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In particular, we celebrate Michael for three main qualities that are basis for this lifetime achievement award:

**—Good Neighbor**: Michael has been careful to tend to and nurture good local relations while developing both intentional communities. That includes collaborating with the local school board, with local merchants, and with elected officials. This is all the more noteworthy in that the community had to weather a difficult time in 1991 when the Quebec group came under attack for its unusual educational practices. After undergoing close public scrutiny the community was exonerated of any wrongdoing and came through the experience without rancor.

**—Community Builder**: Michael has done exemplary work in progressive education and in building La Cité Écologique (both the first group in Quebec and the second one in NH) into vibrant, model ecovillages. His pioneering educational model has helped demonstrate the power of community as a healthy setting for children to develop their innate capacity to become sensitive adults, citizens of the world, and even passionate entrepreneurs.

—**Cooperative Leadership**: By all accounts Michael’s leadership has been exceptional, including his ability to pass it along to younger generations—something that many inspirational leaders do poorly. At La Cité children are encouraged to become leaders and to assume responsibility. Michael once said: “It takes an ecovillage to raise a conscious child.”

Finally, it is of special note that many of the children raised in La Cité Écologique have chosen to remain there as adults, which is an exceptional testament to the appeal of the community to its youth.

For all of these reasons, the FIC’s salutes Michael with this award.