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action centre



Volunteer Action Centre



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Volunteer Action Centre
Waterloo Region

www.volunteerwr.ca

THE VOLUNTEER ACTION CENTRE'S 15TH ANNUAL

VOLUNTEER IMPACT AWARDS

April 23, 2020

GREETINGS AND GRATITUDE



The Volunteer Action Centre is pleased to present the 15th Annual Volunteer Impact Awards as part of our National Volunteer Week 2020 celebrations.

Despite the impact of COVID 19 the spirit of volunteerism is strong and our appreciation for all the heartfelt contributions from those who give of their time and talent cannot be overstated. Our country is built on the contribution of volunteers and we are thrilled to be able to recognize the amazing volunteers celebrated this evening.

Sixteen selected recipients representing individuals, groups and organizations are being recognized for their outstanding “investments in volunteerism” throughout Waterloo Region. Thank you to our panel of community members who helped with the difficult task of choosing from among the many impressive nominations.

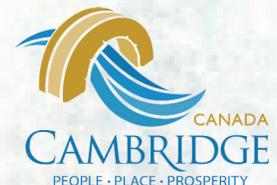
Congratulations and thank you to everyone who was nominated! Many thanks also, to those who took the time to nominate these outstanding individuals and organizations as we simply couldn't do it without you. I would like to acknowledge the United Way Waterloo Region Communities and our area municipalities for their ongoing support of community volunteering and the work of the Volunteer Action Centre.

I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to our generous sponsors and contributors. Thank you Economical Insurance, Toyota Canada, The Country Boy Restaurant and especially to a private donation in memory of Margaret Cowan a long time contributor to our community. Your contributions are essential to the delivery of this annual event. Thank you to Rosemary Aicher for fine artwork to all recipients.

JANE HENNIG
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
VOLUNTEER ACTION CENTRE

THANK YOU SPONSORS & FUNDING PARTNERS

DONATION DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF MARGARET COWAN



NOMINATED VOLUNTEERS

Andrea Deering Nagy

Aracy Selvakumar

Chris Leitzl

Chris Stanley

Colleen Bulla

Diana Pingel

Eckhard Budziarek

Heather McDiarmid

Irene Delisi

Javier Perez

Jean Howitt

Joyce Irving

Justine Lewis

Kae Elgie

Kathryn Craig

Kathy Dupe

Kent Lindner

KidSport Committee

Lara Campbell

Marcel Mantha

Mary Patterson

Mary VanderMunnik

Michelle Bergauer

Michele Henderson

Peter Schnurr

Ramon Talavera

Rick Vandermey

Rita Hemmerich

Robert Pham

Tammy Lawrence

Sandra O'Hagan

Sharon Betts

Wilma Miyasaki

Yngrid Rivas

AWARD CATEGORIES

CARING PROGRAM

This award recognizes a volunteer in a direct service role such as visiting, driving, serving meals, or recreation.

ORGANIZATION SUPPORT

This award recognizes a volunteer in a support role such as reception, office, library support, or research focused.

OUTSTANDING YOUTH

This award recognizes a high school or post-secondary student who exemplifies positive youth engagement and has made an outstanding contribution through their volunteering.

SPECIAL EVENT

This award recognizes an outstanding volunteer in a special event role.

YOUTH MENTORSHIP

This award recognizes a teacher, mentor, or school that has made a significant impact to youth volunteering.

GOOD NEIGHBOUR

This award recognizes individuals who have made a significant contribution to their community, cultural group or neighbourhood.

Thank you to all the nominators, we couldn't do it without you!

AWARD CATEGORIES

GROUP INVOLVEMENT

This award recognizes a board whose participants provided valued leadership for their community organization.

OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP

This award recognizes a board member or leadership volunteer who has supported community through organization leadership.

VOLUNTEER MANAGER

This award recognizes a paid or unpaid manager of volunteers who enthusiastically leads to create a volunteer-friendly community.

VOLUNTEER IMPACT

This award recognizes an extraordinary contribution from a nominee who has created a lasting impression on our community through their passion, inspiration, and commitment.

AWARD OF MERIT

This award acknowledges an individual for their significant contribution to volunteerism and in this case specifically with youth in the City of Kitchener.

AWARD OF MERIT 2020

DANNON VASEY

CITY OF KITCHENER

Dannon is a valued member of the Youth Services team and has been the staff support to the Kitchener Youth Action Council for the past five years. She excels at building relationships and has a unique ability to put the relationship and the volunteer experience over the results of the endeavour.



Her ability to connect with, build trust and develop a rapport, creates safe and supported spaces where youth can make their own choices and are able to “learn by doing”. Dannon has a knack for challenging and motivating youth while letting them know that things are serious, yet she ensures that they feel supported and cared for as individuals. She values their ideas and knows that they need to find their voice. Dannon is a positive role model who is a true service leader. The City of Kitchener is proud to have Dannon receive this recognition, as it is well deserved!



VOLUNTEER IMPACT



KATE MERRIFIELD

KITCHENER CITIZEN

For the past twenty years, Kate has been the lead at King Edward Public School Breakfast Program, guiding a group of volunteers in the daily preparation, cooking and serving of a hot breakfast for over 100 elementary students. Without Kate's consistent and reliable presence there would

not be a breakfast program at this community school where many parents are shift workers and cannot always be there for their children in the morning. Kate provides a caring smile and a sense of security that these children need. In addition to her work at the school, Kate is an active member of her condominium community. She organizes special events for the residents and is always available to help anyone in need. Kate is a loving and caring model of community support. There are not enough words to demonstrate the impact Kate has made to those who have come to know her through all her volunteering. Well deserved recognition for a genuinely caring and kind individual.



AWARD RECIPIENTS

CARING PROGRAM	Deb McCarter
CARING PROGRAM	Sharon Stephens
ORGANIZATION SUPPORT	Daniel Kramer
OUTSTANDING YOUTH	Madeleine Banman
SPECIAL EVENT	Katie McArthur
YOUTH MENTORSHIP	Adam Metcalf
GOOD NEIGHBOUR	Mike & Mary Ann Lorentz
GOOD NEIGHBOUR	Christine Babin
GROUP INVOLVEMENT	Stanley Park Board
GROUP INVOLVEMENT	Athlete of the Year Program
OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP	Duaa Al-Aghar
OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP	Gary Price
VOLUNTEER MANAGER	Christine Kliever
VOLUNTEER IMPACT	HHTH Committee
VOLUNTEER IMPACT	Kate Merrifield
AWARD OF MERIT	Dannon Vasey

CARING PROGRAM



DEB McCARTER

STANLEY PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Deb McCarter is an all-around volunteer who generously shares her time and talents with the Stanley Park Community Association. In over 15 years of involvement Deb has assumed many roles and sets the bar for a cheerful, energetic and caring neighbour. In her position as the volunteer Fitness Coordinator, Deb oversees all things fitness. She helps decide what programs are offered and when; recruits and

coordinates instructors; assists in equipment purchases; and fills in for absent instructors when the need arises. In addition to her interest in fitness, Deb has a love of gardening. As a result, in response to an interest for a community garden, Deb eagerly spearheaded this project. She managed to collaborate with the City and not only secured the garden but also arranged for the fenced perimeter, a garden shed, compost bins, a picnic table, an umbrella, as well as a message-sharing board. Deb actively gardens and her engagement with others helps to build relationships and allows others to showcase their talents. Although Deb devotes considerable time to her coordinator positions, she still manages to participate in other Stanley Park Community Association events. She is the creator of a “room of horror” at Halloween, Santa’s capable elf at Christmas and the “cotton candy queen” at Neighbours Day. Deb is the epitome of a caring, compassionate and involved member of the community.



VOLUNTEER IMPACT

HOCKEY HELPS THE HOMELESS COMMITTEE

The Hockey Helps the Homeless Committee is a group of 14 business persons, retirees and community builders who come together to improve the lives of those who require shelter services. Over the past six years, this group of individuals has invested their



time, energy and resources to raise funds for Lutherwood’s Safe Haven Shelter, House of Friendship’s Charles Street Men’s Shelter, oneROOF Youth Services and the YW Emergency Shelter. Starting this year, Hockey Helps the Homeless will also support the Cambridge Shelter Corporation’s The Bridges. Although their signature event is a one-day, top-rate hockey tournament, where professionals and participants face-off, this committee works year-round to end homelessness. They plan and promote the tournament by recruiting players, soliciting sponsors, and other fundraising events such as breakfasts and lunches, a bowling tournament and even an on-line auction. The HHTH Committee has raised over 1 million dollars to date that provides hot meals, safe places to sleep, showers, and many other supports to perfect strangers. The impact of this team is extraordinary.



VOLUNTEER MANAGER



CHRISTINE KLIEVER

BELMONT VILLAGE BESTIVAL

The Belmont Village Bestival which brings music and art to the people of Waterloo Region has experienced tremendous growth over the past three years. This success would not have been possible without the talents of Christine Kliever. As the Bestival has expanded, so has the need for volunteers.

Christine has done an admirable job of recruiting, communicating with, managing and directing this important volunteer base. Her ability to match volunteers' unique talents to the jobs is invaluable as is her ability to manage the scheduling of this large group of volunteers. Thank you Christine, for tackling this challenging position and for making the Belmont Bestival an important community celebration of art and music that grows more popular each year. In addition to all her hard work with the Bestival, she runs her own business, supporting seniors to live independently. An example of her leadership capabilities and caring spirit towards people. Leave it to Kliever!



CARING PROGRAM

SHARON STEPHENS

STRONG START CHARITABLE
ORGANIZATION

Sharon Stephens, a retired special education teacher, has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to Cedarbrae Public School and to the community of Sunnyside. She is in her third year as the site coordinator for the Strong Start Reading program and has been a weekly volunteer for the Nutrition for Learning program

for over 10 years. Sharon truly cares about the children and their well-being and directs this compassion through her intentional and targeted actions. She is adept at supporting children in both structure and unstructured situations and has been a mentor, role model and coach for other volunteers, parents, as well as, teachers. While Sharon recognizes the value of developing early literacy skills she, more importantly, understands the critical need to build confidence and self-esteem in the students with whom she interacts. She makes them feel special and ensures that they come to think of themselves as successful learners. Over the years, Sharon has impacted hundreds of children, staff, volunteers and families in the community. Her genuine empathy, kindness and intuitive understanding of a child's needs set her apart as a volunteer and trusted adult in the school community.



ORGANIZATION SUPPORT



DANIEL KRAMER

HOUSE OF FRIENDSHIP

Daniel Kramer is a motivated, reliable and dedicated volunteer who willingly shares his love for helping people. He is a steady fixture at both the House of Friendship's Emergency Food Hamper and the Christmas Hamper Programs. As a result of his efforts, these programs are able to distribute food to approximately 100 families daily and over 4000 households at Christmas. At the Emergency Food Hamper location, Daniel works in the warehouse and is often found dividing stock into smaller portions

so that it does not run out. This outgoing volunteer also packs hampers for the families that come in for food. He greets everyone with a smile and always treats them with dignity and respect. Three years ago, Daniel stepped into a leadership role with the Christmas Hamper Program. His responsibilities include the organization, training and supervision of the assembly line workers and, once the distribution begins, he works on the loading dock to ensure that each volunteer delivery person is given the correct hamper. In addition to his support with the House of Friendship, Daniel oversees the Monday morning preschool program at the Waterloo North Mennonite Church. Daniel has a knack for creating a positive experience for these children and their families. He has also provided tremendous support to the refugee families sponsored by the church. Daniel is a compassionate, selfless volunteer who is adept at creating a positive atmosphere no matter where he is.



OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP

GARY PRICE

IDEA EXCHANGE



Gary has spent 25 years on the Board of the Cambridge Public Libraries, serves on the Trustee Council for the Southern Ontario Library Service, Council 2, and is a member of the Southern Ontario Library Service Board. Over the years, he has been a critical part of at least five major renovations and expansions within that system, including the creation of Canada's first digital library. He was also instrumental in changing

the name of the library to the Idea Exchange, a move that reflects a bold new direction which redefines the expanding role of the library as a community hub. Under his leadership, the Idea Exchange has a clear and focused mandate to "support and inspire our community in the exploration of reading, arts, innovation and learning". In addition, Gary has an innovative approach to volunteerism whereby people share their personal skills with others. The "How to By You" program has helped to create a local volunteer culture that is about engagement, connection and shared learning. Gary's tireless efforts and his generous sharing of expertise have helped to provide much needed facilities and resources that have positively impacted the Cambridge community.



OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP



DUAA AL-AGHAR

ISLAMIC HUMANITARIAN SERVICE

Since her arrival in Canada in 2006, Duaa Al-Aghar has become a positive force and an exceptional leader in our Region. This humble, selfless individual, who is devoted to improving the lives of others, has impacted diverse and extensive sectors of our community through a myriad of endeavours. She has worked

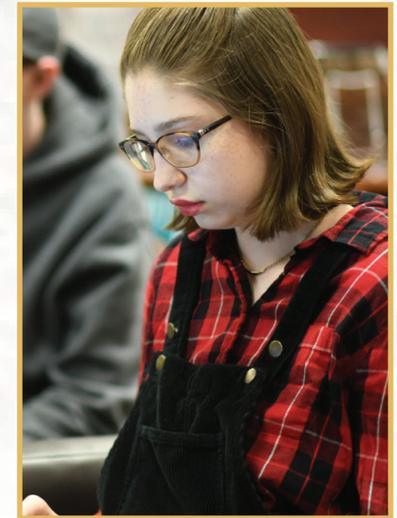
to liaise between various cultural communities, has been active in creating violence-free communities and has been a champion role model for many women and young girls. Duaa is an advocate for social justice and works tirelessly to break down barriers by being visible at a wide variety of events. Her energetic presence is valued wherever she goes and, through her understanding of the importance of health and well-being, she has managed to support, encourage and guide others in their journeys. In addition to her contributions to this community, Duaa has not forgotten her native Iraq. She has raised and delivered funds to Iraqi orphans and widows so that they are able to start a new life. We are so very fortunate to have such a personable, compassionate, insightful, inspirational and exceptional leader in the Region of Waterloo.



OUTSTANDING YOUTH

MADELEINE BANMAN

IDEA EXCHANGE



Madeleine Banman is an articulate and bright young woman who has been sharing her creative talents with the Idea Exchange for over two years. She has volunteered in a number of capacities each of which has centred on her desire to create a more connected and collaborative community. Part of the Teen Tastemakers team, she has written book reviews, social media posts and blogs as a way to provide a team perspective to online outreach. As an example of her engagement, Madeleine participated in the 2018 Battle of the Books and her persuasive defence resulted in her book winning the debate and being named Book of the Year. She also supported authors during National Novel Writers Month by designing covers for their manuscripts and as a member of the Teen Media Team, has provided photographs for the Idea Exchange Facebook and Instagram pages. In 2019, Madeleine was a participant in the Around the World in Thirty Stories program which highlighted cultural stories from both newcomers and those who have been settled in the area for a while. Recently, Madeleine became the first teen workshop leader in the How To By You program. In a setting where community members share a skill or talent with others, she chose to organize an American Sign Language (ASL) Drop-In program with activities designed to support ASL learning. Although she is only 16 years old, Madeleine possesses natural leadership skills and an impressive work ethic.



SPECIAL EVENT



KATIE McARTHUR

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
OF THE WATERLOO REGION

Katie McArthur has been a volunteer with Family and Children's Services for six years wherever she was needed. She has provided childcare so that parents were able to attend workshops and spend time at the hospital cuddling infants who were alone. Katie's most significant contribution to Family and Children's Services has

come in the form of her efforts with special events. She has assisted with an annual fundraising hockey tournament for five years in a row (regardless of the weather) and has contributed in various ways for events hosted by the Resiliency Project. Katie's most profound impact, however, has been with the Holiday Support Program where she has taken the lead in Santa's Gift Shop. During the month of December, Kate is in the shop on a daily basis to coordinate the other volunteers and to ensure the effective organization of thousands of gifts. Katie has provided guidance to workers and families as they selected their gifts. She has managed these interactions with integrity and compassion while gently and politely keeping people within the established limits. At the conclusion of the holidays, Katie is the person who cleans the shop and packs things away for use the next year. Katie's contributions have come with no expectation of recognition but her efforts have certainly not gone unnoticed. Thank you, Kate!



FAMILY &
CHILDREN'S SERVICES
OF THE WATERLOO REGION

GROUP INVOLVEMENT

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR COMMITTEE

KITCHENER CITIZENS

The Athlete of the Year program began in 1998 with a mandate of recognizing and celebrating the sporting achievements and performance of local elite athletes in the area, there have been over 160 nominations to date. Athletes from a broad range of sports have been recognized including individual athletes, pairs of athletes, athletes from teams, as well as Paralympic athletes. Athletic recognition is not the sole purpose of this event. Equally important is the fact that the families of the nominees are provided the opportunity to gather and share the common bond of having supported these athletes. From 2002 until 2008, the program expanded its scope to include the Award of Excellence program, providing special recognition to an individual, organization and team who contributed to the sports fabric of the community. Although there have been many original and long-term volunteers, the strength and continuity of the program has resulted from the extraordinary leadership, hard work and commitment of its Chair, Jean Howitt. As a testament to her incredible passion for honouring athletes, Jean has been indept at communicating her vision and has been a stabilizing force behind the Athlete of the Year program. Congratulations and thanks to all the members!



GROUP INVOLVEMENT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

STANLEY PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

The Stanley Park Community Association, led by a dedicated 10-member Board, has been described by other community partners as a model association. This well organized, active and passionate group meets regularly and prides itself on making decisions that both guide and support the needs of their community. They endeavour to foster community spirit by encouraging people of all ages to participate in a wide variety of activities ranging from workshops and regularly-scheduled programs to large special events.

This group is adept at managing their large volunteer base and ensures that all activities are run with enthusiasm and professionalism. They understand the value of making people feel a part of the team which allow many of their events to run seamlessly. This amazing group of ordinary individuals is truly making an impact on the lives of others in their community. Kudos to all!



YOUTH MENTORSHIP

ADAM METCALF

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
OF THE WATERLOO REGION

Adam Metcalf is a Constable with the Waterloo Regional Police Services who has volunteered with the Me to We: Going Local Group for over five years. He has had extensive involvement with this organization, providing one-to-one support as needed and is an Adult Ally to many young people in the community. Adam has worked diligently to build positive relationships in developing trust and has been instrumental in the healing and growth of youth who have, or are experiencing, trauma. Adam recognizes the value of these young persons in the community and strives to help them realize their potential, in order to contribute to our society. He helps to eliminate barriers which prevent youth from accessing the knowledge, skills, supports and programs that can assist them on their journeys. Adam demonstrates incredible patience and his quiet disposition allows those who feel that no one cares to believe that he is there for them. He understands that building relationships takes time and he has demonstrated his willingness to take that time. Adam's ability to "be present", to answer questions, to engage in meaningful conversations and to work alongside youth make him an asset and a valuable mentor in our community.



GOOD NEIGHBOUR



MIKE & MARY ANN LORENTZ

WATERLOO CITIZENS

For 36 years, Mike and Mary Ann Lorentz have made the Anndale Road neighbourhood their own. Over this time, they have focused on helping others “in the hood” to cherish it as well. Their vision for a connected and caring neighbourhood has taken shape through selfless volunteerism and fundraising. Whether it is welcoming new neighbours,

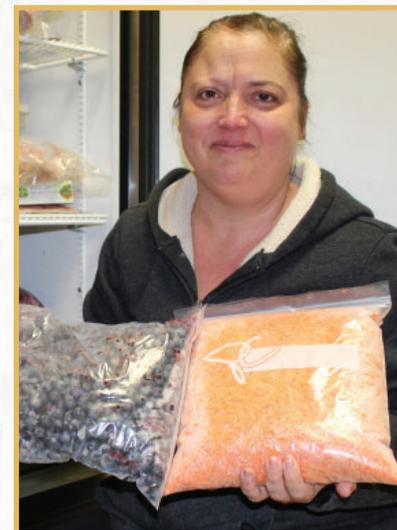
shovelling snow for those who cannot, house and pet sitting or helping deal with a flooded basement, Mike and Mary Ann have set the bar for what one wants in a great neighbourhood. By hosting celebrations for family milestones or farewell events for those leaving the hood, Mike and Mary Ann have made it their mission to bring neighbours together in times of change. In addition to helping in their neighbourhood, Mike and Mary Ann have supported community agencies such as the Waterloo Region Down Syndrome Society and the Out of the Cold Program. This caring, compassionate couple truly exemplifies neighbourly spirit and friendship.



GOOD NEIGHBOUR

CHRISTINE BABIN

HOUSE OF FRIENDSHIP



Christine has been volunteering for the House of Friendship's Kingsdale Community Centre for 15 years and, for the past three years, has been the Chair of the Neighbourhood Association. In both of these roles, Christine has demonstrated the best qualities of a good neighbour. She is a caring and generous person who is very inclusive and always welcoming to others. Christine treats people with dignity no matter their lot in life and has been critical in making her community “stronger together”. She has organized numerous neighbourhood events ensuring that everyone who wants to be involved can do so in whatever capacity they feel comfortable. Thanks to Christine, the community centre is not just a place to receive food or other supports. Christine is also a creative person. She recognized that food was going bad before it could be used. As a result, she took it upon herself to source funding in order to purchase a vacuum sealer, food processor and dehydrator. Her efforts have resulted in the preservation of more food, less waste and more options for families in need. Christine is truly a “Nourishing Neighbour”.

