

2023 Good Citizen Award Recipients

Deacon Charles Baumgartner

For seniors in long-term care the volunteers of the Friendly Visiting Program can be a lifeline to relieve loneliness and re-establish community contacts. The companionship offered and friendships that are cemented benefit both the seniors and the visitors. For the Roman Catholic residents at Pioneer Ridge Long-Term Care Home, Deacon Charles Baumgartner has been volunteering to provide spiritual friendly visiting for over five years.



Deacon Baumgartner lives in Manitoba, where he is a very busy member of his church, visiting the sick in hospital, conducting services in long-term care homes and assisting at Mass. When he is visiting Thunder Bay, he never hesitates to volunteer his time to the residents of Pioneer Ridge, providing both small group church services and also one-to-one communion visits to those who would like it.

During the pandemic, when volunteers and services were limited, these visits became increasingly essential due to the isolation that many residents were experiencing. As the vulnerable in our community continue to face a threat from contracting Covid-19, Deacon Baumgartner starts his visits with the added task of screening, rapid testing, and wearing PPE in order to protect the residents. This is always undertaken without complaint or hesitation so that he can enhance the lives of those he visits.

Deacon Baumgartner is a dedicated and committed volunteer, and everybody at Pioneer Ridge long-term care home is honored to nominate him for the Good Citizen Award.

Melanie Beebe

Since 2013 Melanie Beebe has been a valued member of the Thunder Bay Society of Ballet and Dance, as Director for two years and Treasurer for the past seven years.

Melanie is a calm and creative problem solver, and a wonderful team player who is always thinking of the good of the dancers in the Thunder Bay region. She is exceptionally organized, efficient, and diligent in her management of the society's financial assets and accounts. She frequently attends bank meetings and reports upon the budget whenever required.



Melanie has managed countless fundraisers for the society ensuring scholarship cheques can be awarded to deserving dance recipients at the Lakehead Music Festival, recognizing their talents, and allowing them to further their dance education.

Melanie's love of the arts, and dance, is always obvious at any meeting and event that she attends. The social media pages of the Thunder Bay Society of Ballet and Dance are enhanced by Melanie's creation of beautiful advertisements and graphics which has contributed to large attendances at any event held.

By far, Melanie's favorite part of the year is volunteering as a Ballet Society member at the Lakehead Music Festival. She helps wherever there is a need and enjoys watching the performers grow from year to year.

The Thunder Bay Society of Ballet and Dance thank Melanie for her dedication and hard work. They are happy to nominate her for this award.

Jennifer Bouchard

For the past 19 years, whilst raising her own children, Jennifer Bouchard has provided a safe and loving home environment for many children in the fostering system and has made a lasting impact on these children's lives.

Additionally in 2019 Jennifer became active in the 'Our Kids Count' agency as a recommended citizen to join the Planning Team Committee. Our Kids Count, operates under a Community Development model, meeting with community members to direct programs and help decide focus as an agency. Planning Team members also participate in programs and live in the communities that are served.



Jennifer has been an amazing volunteer to the organization, holding both the positions of Secretary and Board Representative on the Planning Team. As a Board Representative Jennifer meets with the Board of Directors monthly to update them on any new ideas the Planning Team has, along with successes and possible future initiatives.

Her activities do not stop there, as Jennifer has also taken the time to facilitate several workshops including an Indigenous Paint and Learn session, beading workshops, and is currently holding a book club. As a Peer Leader for the Community Kitchens Programs, Jennifer has provided outreach to families ensuring they are fully aware of all that is available to them.

Jennifer is a graduate of the HBA program in Psychology with a minor in Indigenous Learning. Our Kids Count was very happy to sponsor Jennifer to undertake the Leadership

Thunder Bay Program, a clear testament to her commitment to furthering her knowledge and skills.

Jennifer is committed to helping our community by enriching her own life and the lives of those in it. She has stepped up and taken the lead when others have been unable to, and, in doing so, she has truly found her voice. Jennifer wants to make a difference in this place we call home.

Simon Dolega

While Simon Dolega came to Thunder Bay to study Geology at Lakehead University, he had the talents and energy of an amazing Ukrainian dancer. Coupled with great musical ability, Ukrainian dancing soon became one of his out of school interests.

The Chaban Ukrainian Dance Group has been the grateful recipient of Simon's volunteerism with him taking on a variety of roles within the group. These have included the role of assistant teacher for teenage dancers, and teaching and choreographing for Chaban's small group entries in competitions both in Thunder Bay and beyond. He has also held the role of Executive Member, Coordinator for Chaban's entries in dance competitions, Co-Assistant Artistic Director for the Ensemble Group, and Co-Choreographer for Ensemble Group dances.



Simon's debut with Chaban was as 'Pawn Jovi' (the Ukrainian version of Bon Jovi) in the 2011/12 dance season where his great stage presence and ability to energize a room shone through. His extensive knowledge of technology and wonderful ear for music, has led him to edit music for Chaban for many years.

Simon's dances and his work behind the scenes, have been appreciated by audiences and dancers alike. Allowing for the beauty of Ukrainian dance to shine and assisting Chaban to promote Ukrainian culture and traditions through dance. His creativity and talents are refreshing and the caliber and energy of Chaban is ever improved by Simon's consistent dedication.

Although he may be known as the fellow who performs the amazing back flips and split jumps, there is so much more talent that Simon has shared with many others within our community. His contribution to Ukrainian dance, culture, the dancers he inspires, and the audiences he entertains, makes him a true candidate for this award.

Alexa Grant

The Sister Leila Greco Apartments is a non-profit senior's supportive housing building. The apartments are designed for seniors who require support to be able to live independently in the community.

Alexa Grant was Sister Leila Greco's very first volunteer in 2013 when she was a grade nine student. Alexa came to the apartments to lead a group in making a ladybug craft and has continued to enrich the lives and brighten the days of many.



Alexa has always been an integral part of Life Enrichment, volunteering for countless events and activities. She has played a wide variety of games, served endless ice cream cones and hotdogs. She has been a caring listener and has even led a few Conga lines. She has effortlessly created a rapport and connection with everyone that she has encountered, always sharing her charm and enthusiasm.

All through High School and while attending University in Edmonton, Alexa's dedication to Sister Leila Greco never waned, returning home for the holidays, and volunteering her time. During the pandemic, Alexa and her dog visited tenants through the windows of their apartments, which brought many smiles and helped combat feelings of loneliness.

It is difficult to express the appreciation, respect, and admiration that the staff, tenants and fellow volunteers have for Alexa. Her thoughtful, caring nature has made her a valuable part of the volunteer team. Her commitment to sharing her time and talents have brought encouragement and connection to those who need it most.

The Therapeutic Recreation Team are proud of and grateful to Alexa for all that she has given to them for the past decade. They are happy to nominate her for the Good Citizen Award.

Natalia Hibbert

Since the formation of the Zorya Ukrainian Dance Association in 1997, Natalia Hibbert has been there to support them in their mission of providing instruction in traditional Ukrainian dance to anyone who wishes to learn.

As a youth Natalia had been part of a Ukrainian dance group, both as a dancer and as an instructor. She was eager to ensure that her children had the same opportunity. She became a member of the Board of Directors from 2003-2007, doing an excellent job and taking her responsibilities very seriously. For many years, Natalia has been



a Head Instructor with the Zorya dancers, eager to continue her learning and share it with others within the school.

Natalia's knowledge of the Ukrainian language and customs has facilitated her in creating a group called the Zorya Carolers. Following an old and much-loved Ukrainian tradition, the Zorya Carolers go from house to house, during the Christmas season. They sing Ukrainian and English Christmas carols to those who love to hear the joyful message of the festive season.

As a dancer Natalia has performed at special events such as the Folklore Festival, Zorya's Year-end Concert. As an instructor she ensured that the dancers are prepared and ready to respond to requests to perform in our community. In 2019, the Zorya dancers were invited to represent both Thunder Bay and Canada by dancing at Ukraine's Independence Day celebrations in Kiev. Natalia was there providing support and ensuring that the group were excellent ambassadors for Thunder Bay.

Natalia has been active in improving and enriching both Zorya and our city, and she is an excellent role model for young parents and dancers. Her dedication has been apparent throughout the years. Her volunteer efforts have helped the Zorya Ukrainian Dance Association grow into, not only the successful dance group that it is today, but a Zorya family that invites anyone that wishes to participate.

Irene Krasniuk

Regional Cancer Care Northwest provides care to people going through cancer treatment and their families. Established in 1948, the program consists of a regional Cancer Centre located in Thunder Bay. Irene Krasniuk has been a dedicated and reliable volunteer there for over 15 years.

Volunteers at the Cancer Centre play a vital role in the journey that the patients, their families, and loved ones take. They are often the very first friendly face they meet after checking in at reception.

Many new patients feel overwhelmed, especially at their first appointment, but the gentle reassurance and helpful information that a volunteer can give is always appreciated.

Over her 15 years volunteering Irene has regularly undertaken her four-hour weekly shift, offering a beverage or a snack to anyone that wants it, or a warm blanket, and some friendly conversation to patients and their family members. She can also be found offering her assistance to people trying to find their way around, helping with the computer, and providing clerical support to staff wherever needed.

Irene and her fellow volunteers at Regional Cancer Care Northwest are all there for the same reason – to give back and make a difference for somebody else. One of the volunteer



team leaders has described Irene as ‘compassionate, thoughtful and dedicated, among one of the most caring people I have met.’

Regional Cancer Care Northwest thanks Irene for her 15 years of service and is happy to nominate her for the Thunder Bay Good Citizen Award.

Brian McKinnon



The Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation is the fundraising arm of the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. It is through generous donations and events held in our community that the Foundation can fund grants that purchase much needed vital medical equipment for our hospital.

Brian McKinnon has been dedicating his time to the Foundation for over 25 years. This began in the 90's with the Northern Cancer Research Foundation and has continued with the Health Sciences Foundation after their integration in 2008. He is currently a member of the Board of Directors.

Through his volunteer work with the Foundation, Brian has assisted in liaising with the wider community by providing his support at multiple fundraising events. By sitting on a variety of committees, Brian ensures any funds raised are appropriately disbursed to the area in which they are most needed.

Brian's continued dedication to the Health Sciences Foundation has had a significant impact on our community, raising the funds needed to ensure better healthcare in our region and helping to put the essential tools into the hands of our medical professionals.

Brian enjoys volunteering and wants to help make a difference in his community. He has certainly achieved that for the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation.

Bonnie Mintenko

Thunder Bay has a wide variety of Community Centres where many neighborhood and community-based events are held. Oliver Road Community Centre is one of those which benefits from the tireless work of the Ladies Auxiliary and volunteers like Bonnie Mintenko.

Bonnie joined Oliver Road Community Centre in 2013 and has been volunteering her time regularly raising much needed funds for the Centre. Whenever there is a special occasion, such as the very popular Christmas Tea and Bazaar, Bonnie can be found in the kitchen enthusiastically making delicious sandwiches for visitors to enjoy. For the Winter Carnival, a community event enjoyed by many, Bonnie spends her time preparing perogies to sell to the eager crowd.



The Spring and Fall Yard Sales bring in a large attendance and Bonnie assists by selling tickets and donating her delicious home-made baked goods to entice the crowds of people in.

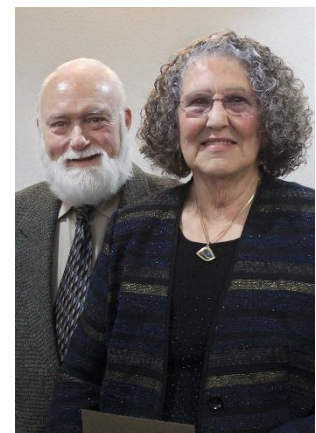
Such fundraising events are essential to the Centre, enabling the purchase of items such as chairs, tables, paper products, cleaning supplies, and upgrading older appliances. All these items are appreciated and utilized by anyone making use of the Community Centre.

Bonnie is described as ‘a good worker, pleasant to all, and willing to contribute whenever asked’ and the Oliver Road Community Centre is pleased to nominate her for the Good Citizen Award.

Ian and Shirley Robson

Over the last 14 years Shirley and Ian Robson of the Thunder Bay Horticultural Society have worked tirelessly to rehabilitate and beautify the gardens and environs at Magnus Theatre.

Working on a long-term, sustainable plan for the Magnus gardens, the Robson’s have recruited volunteers to help, and have organized and directed their activities. The team that the Robson’s have assembled, and lead, is an inspiring amalgam of the young and old, those with extensive horticultural experience and those with none. The Robson’s direct this team with impressive skill, motivating, coaching, mentoring, while challenging them.



The Robson’s have also reached out to other stakeholders to magnify the substantial resources required to maintain the extensive scope of the Theatre’s gardens by serving as liaisons between Magnus, the City of Thunder Bay, the Horticultural Society, and the Coalition for Waverley Park. The Robson’s have effectively brought these groups together by coordinating labour, budgets, and expertise – all to the benefit of the Theatre and the broader community. Their innovative nature has also led to a run-off water collection and storage system which employs an array of barrels, hoses, and controls, in turn keeping the garden watered and preventing flooding in the theatre’s basement and the Central School House.

The Robson’s have pursued all their work at Magnus selflessly, not only in the long hours spent working the gardens, but also by generously purchasing supplies, plants, and refreshments for their team of volunteers. They are both perfect ambassadors for the Theatre, cheerfully greeting patrons, actors, and pedestrians as they make their way through the Theatre’s grounds. Magnus has received numerous compliments regarding the improvements that are being made.

Shirley and Ian's fine work has had a positive impact on the aesthetic, cultural and economic facets of the Waverly Park Heritage and Waterfront Business Districts and it is an honour to nominate them for the Good Citizen Award.

Aleksa Shermack



Aleksa Shermack has been a key part of the Eleanor Drury Children's Theatre since she began volunteering as the Director of Annual Productions in 2013.

Working closely with the Board of Directors and Production Team, Aleksa has been instrumental in building a truly actor and child-centred program, one that has provided open and inclusive artistic spaces for a diverse group of youth in our community. She has built a team around her that provides an especially safe space for gender fluid and neurodivergent youth, a space in which each actor can thrive and explore new aspects of themselves.

As a leader she has always listened to and incorporated the ideas and perspective of the youth in the program and has invited actors to help design and create their own costumes and props. For the last three productions, Aleksa has invited interested actors to be directly involved in the script writing process, while providing them with the support they need to see their projects through to completion.

During Covid, Aleksa led the effort to move the programming online and has been a key part of outreach to remote communities, resulting in being able to incorporate an actor from Moose Factory into each play since 2020.

Beyond being central to their mission to provide low-cost, high quality children's theatre to our community, Aleksa inspires the best in all the Eleanor Drury actors and puts them at the centre of each production.

Her involvement in community projects sponsored, and supported by Eleanor Drury Children's Theatre, has meant that she has been able to touch the lives of youth outside of the organization as well. Aleksa has run participant-driven projects for the Boys and Girls Club, has been instrumental in organizing and delivering the Forum Theatre Program and, has been a key part of the In-School Art Programming connected to annual productions.

The Actors of the Eleanor Drury Children's Theatre and their families provide consistently high praise of Aleksa, and she is more than deserving of the Good Citizen Award.

Jack Verheoven

The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) has existed since 1971 and is a longstanding partnership between the Canada Revenue Agency, community organizations and their volunteers.

Participating organizations host free tax clinics where volunteers' complete income tax and benefit returns for eligible individuals to ensure they receive, or continue to receive, the benefits and credits they are entitled to.

For the low-income seniors of our community, this service is hosted solely by the Thunder Bay 55 Plus Centre, and Jack Verhoeven has been consistently volunteering his time for the past 20 years.

Jack's friendly smile and kind demeanor have put many people at ease during the yearly stress of filing taxes. He would always make sure to share the process and the numbers as he went along, ensuring people understood what was happening and what they could expect, either by way of return, or heaven forbid, the amount they may have to pay.

After 20 years of volunteering Jack has decided that he would not participate in the program this year, explaining that it was time to make room for younger people to get a foot in the door.

Jack will be busy spending his time participating in clubs such as Gyro, a business networking and sharing group that discusses the stock market, while also taking some well-earned time for himself, participating in his favorite hobbies, reading, and gardening.

Jack has been such an important part of the Senior's Income Tax Program and has watched it evolve into the program it is today, which Jack has diligently provided with humility and grace. Anyone who came to see him has been treated with respect and dignity, and he will be sorely missed. It is an honour to recognize the incredible dedication that he has shown with the Good Citizen Award.

Darlene Wilson

Leadership Thunder Bay is a charitable non-profit organization that provides leadership development opportunities for individuals, organizations, and businesses in Thunder Bay.

Darlene Wilson has been an active Committee Volunteer and Member of the Board since her graduation in 2008. Darlene is currently Chair of the Communication committee and has also sat on the Recruitment & Selection and Engagement & Development committees.

The work that the organization does is both beneficial for businesses and future leaders of our community. It is designed to help participants acquire both a broader understanding of the critical issues locally and the leadership skills necessary to resolve them; this work is something Darlene is passionate about.

Devoting much of her time to ensuring board governance and branding remains accurate, Darlene has ensured that a quality program has been provided to the City of Thunder Bay. She is now on her second term as a Board Director with her opinion and ideas always generating meaningful conversation and her point of view being highly valued.

Leadership Thunder Bay would like to thank Darlene for her dedication and service to the Board and her continued volunteerism. Without volunteers like Darlene, Leadership Thunder Bay would not be able to achieve their mission of developing, strengthening, and connecting leaders to and within our community.

Peng You



For over 25 years, Peng You has spent countless hours as a dedicated volunteer for the betterment of the community of Thunder Bay and district. He has served in many volunteer capacities, has been key in promoting Tai Chi as a health benefit, and the City of Thunder Bay as a destination.

As an official 'Master' of Tai Chi, Peng You introduced the art to Thunder Bay on a large scale, establishing the 'Peng You Taiji Quan Association' and holding an International Forum on Taiji', bringing international participants and Grand Masters from China. Since these events, China has recognized Thunder Bay as the 'Tai Chi City' of Canada and Centre of Excellence for Taiji Quan.

Over the years, Peng You has provided numerous Tai Chi demonstrations to diverse groups. He has taught and trained instructors to qualify as teachers. He has also arranged for the Grandmaster to visit and teach Tai Chi Workshops. At Canada Day celebrations Peng You has taught and organized participants, with the gathering in 2003 being the largest at one time and per capita practicing Tai Chi outside of China.

The International Taiji Park at the Marina became a reality in 2012 after much planning and fundraising initiated by the Peng You Taiji Quan Association. The park now has three life-size bronze statues provided by Jiaozuo, China, which, without Peng You's influence, would not have been a possibility.

Free Tai Chi practice sessions during summer months were initiated by Peng You and this continues today. Through the pandemic he offered Zoom workshops helping participants deal with isolation and improve health. In 2018 he was formally accepted at Chen Village, China, the birthplace of Tai Chi, as an 'inside' student of Grandmaster Chen in a rare and elaborate ceremony.

In our city Peng You is synonymous with the art of Tai Chi. He has provided leadership, creativity, and innovation on many levels, and has promoted Tai Chi as a health benefit for

people of all ages and abilities. Peng You has been a true ambassador for our city, promoting it as a destination for a visit, or to conduct business, or to call home.

Peng You's name translated from Chinese means 'Friend' and this has become his legacy in Thunder Bay and beyond.

2023 Spirit of Thunder Bay Award Recipients

Craig Berglund

At St. Joseph's Care Group everyone is considered unique, and each person's religious and spiritual life is respected. Spiritual Care is a service available to clients and their loved ones as they deal with the challenges and changes which arise during their stay.

Craig Berglund has been volunteering his time, supporting clients over more than 30 years as a Spiritual Care Volunteer, longer than any Spiritual Care staff have been employed. Craig is described as 'being able to talk to anyone about anything' and is skilled in remembering a face or a name from his earlier years. He can find a point of connection with any hospital patient and can have the most serious person laughing in no time at all.

Craig encourages patients to keep going when they are at their lowest points and is open to sharing his own experiences of trauma, pain, and perseverance. His faith in God has lent him strength through the tough times and he will speak of this to anyone who may benefit from his story. Several friendships have developed and extended beyond the hospital setting, creating community for people who have been without.

Craig had several obstacles to overcome to volunteer at St. Joseph's Hospital. Parking was a challenge, staff supervisors changed regularly, and clients were not always available when he came to visit. Despite finding navigating hospital restrictions a challenge, Craig continued with good humour and grace, and carried on regardless. During the early years of the pandemic Craig was one of the first volunteers to resume his hospital visits by switching to tele-visits when he could not attend in person.

St Joseph's Care Group is grateful to have Craig Berglund as part of their valuable volunteer team. He is caring, compassionate, and committed to sharing his time and talents, bringing encouragement and connection to those who need it most and is very deserving of this award.

Myra Bjorn

Born in England in 1941, Myra Bjorn came to Rainy River and worked in bush camps until she moved to Thunder Bay, continuing her education, and graduating as a Registered Nurse.

Myra has given much of her free time to the 55 Plus Centre, the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, and the Northwest Senior Games, despite being busy with her growing family. She is a valued member of the Hilldale Lutheran Church and is responsible for the coordination of funerals, showers, and other church gatherings. Through her many hours of giving, Myra has met many individuals and has encouraged them to join in with their own volunteerism.



After her retirement from nursing Myra never stopped working. Many a charity has benefitted from her skill in knitting, making countless items for the less fortunate, whilst collecting socks and underwear for charities to distribute.

In 1997 Myra joined the Thunder Bay Food Bank as a volunteer, the Board of Directors in 2014, and has been instrumental in recruiting others to support its ongoing needs. Her dedication has brought many members and volunteers to help the operations and, even after her retirement from the Board, she continued to lend her time and efforts. Her passion for helping the less fortunate has led her to support the accessibility of more culturally appropriate food for all, ensuring food orders are placed for Halal meat.

Myra's work in the food security sector has seen her also lending her time to 'Empty Bowls, Caring Hearts Thunder Bay' where she has been an essential part of their fundraising efforts every year.

Myra can often be found supporting her neighbours when nursing matters arise and helps ease their transition home. Her organization of pizza nights and birthday parties, providing opportunities for others to make social connections and building community in her own apartment complex, have not gone unnoticed.

Myra Bjorn has, for many years, been dedicated to the betterment of our community. Although she says she is going to 'retire' it is apparent that Myra will continue to be a good citizen in our city, and she will carry on doing good for our community. Thank you, Myra.

Joan Duke

As a volunteer in our community Joan Duke has committed many hours to a variety of causes for most of her life. Starting when she was only 15, she worked with disabled swimmers at the YMCA in Port Arthur and continues to this day.

Joan is a community-based volunteer who uses her knowledge and time to try to improve the social, economic and health situations of many people, especially seniors. The Seniors' Diners Club of the Canadian Red Cross has benefitted from Joan's involvement. This led her to working at the front desk and becoming a part of their Disaster Management Team. Her involvement with Age Friendly Thunder Bay saw her being elected to the Board of Directors where she is still an active member.



Her involvement in community Public Library systems has seen Joan serve for many years as the Chairperson of the Board. She was elected for several terms as the Northwestern Ontario Representative to Ontario Library Service North and other groups. Her most recent term of eight years with the Thunder Bay Board saw her elected as the Northwest Representative to the Ontario Library Association's Public Library Board Committee where she served four years as Secretary.

Currently Joan's volunteer commitments extend to many areas of the city. The Thunder Bay Regional Hospital sees her serving on the Research Institute and Ethics Committee and she is also active in the formation of the Thunder Bay and area Ontario Health Team.

She can be found working for charity bingos for the VON, delivering books for the Thunder Bay Friends of the Library, volunteering at shows and charity bingos for Magnus Theatre, and concerts for Consortium Aurora Borealis. Age Friendly Thunder Bay and the 55 Plus Board of Directors benefit from her serving as a member, and her involvement in many committees.

Joan states that 'as a lifelong learner, I feel that with positive change I can help impact, adds health and purpose to my life, and for that I am most grateful.' Joan loves to talk to people and feels privileged to hear their opinions and stories.

Our community is lucky to have such an individual as Joan offering her compassion and knowledge to our city and the surrounding areas. She deserves to be recognized for her years of valued service.

John Garland



For John Garland 'giving back' was at the centre of his life and for many years he volunteered in a variety of roles with commitment and dedication. His love of running was something he wished others to experience, and his goal was to help people improve their health and well-being through an active lifestyle.

In his 10 years as member and 18 years as Chair and Race Director of the 10 Mile Road Race Committee the attendance grew to almost 1,000 participants and has become the premier running event of the region.

As Head Coach of the Lakehead Athletics and Masters Running Club he fully committed to his role for 12 months a year over 18 years. In later years he continued to perform this role with assistance from others, and his advice and wisdom was highly valued. John, among others, created the KStar Running Series. A program for runners to challenge themselves by competing against the fastest times set worldwide, with the opportunity to be awarded a plaque at the year-end banquet.

John was instrumental in helping the sport of squash flourish within our community as an elite player, official, tournament organizer, coach, and instructor. He started the Squash League; and was the backbone of Thunder Bay's squash culture.

Elected to the Board of the Northwestern Ontario Sports Hall of Fame in 1995, he served on the Executive Committee from 2000-2021, holding every position, including Treasurer, Vice-President, Secretary and President. Throughout these 26 years of service to this organization, he served as a member of various committees and helped with several events and fundraising activities.

At Confederation College John could be found providing instruction at the Fitness Centre and coaching the cross-country running team, while at the Canada Games Complex, he would provide fitness opportunities to people of all ages and abilities.

As a Board member of Kairos Community Resource Centre, John believed in the importance of providing services to youth and families through a rehabilitative rather than punitive lens, and that individuals are not only responsible for themselves but to the community at large.

John was an active member of the (formerly Elk's) Big Band Klown Band for 24 years. He performed and acted as a reliable sound man at the Children's Christmas Shows and throughout the rest of the year the Band played and still does, at nursing homes and senior centres each Wednesday afternoon.

John, with his quiet and humble nature, and as a model of healthy living, has led untold numbers of citizens to find joy in activity and sport. He has made a lasting contribution on

both an individual and community level and is thoroughly deserving of the Spirit of Thunder Bay Award.

Holly Haggarty

Holly Haggarty is a Thunder Bay Author and Artist Educator who has shared her creative skills since 1988 as a member of Chaban Ukrainian Dance Group among many other societies and groups in our community.

In her earlier years Holly showed her spirit of giving by instructing the Jackrabbits course and volunteering at events at Kamview and Lappe Cross Country Ski Centres, and spending time on various committees as part of the School Council at Ecole Gron Morgan.



She has donated time to her church community as a Marriage and Artist Educator in the Diocese of Thunder Bay, a Lector at St Patrick's Church, and spent years as a mission team member at Nu-Vision Ministry, Canada.

Holly has been a guest lecturer on Arts in Education for various academic societies and lent her artistic skills to other areas such as a make-up artist at Lakehead Inter-Professional Student Society.

As a Chaban volunteer, Holly has collaborated with others on the writing of concert scripts, narrations, and programs. She has donated her skill and expertise to proofreading and editing narrations and concert programs. Holly's involvement has resulted in entertaining and educational concerts, contributing to the cultural diversity of Thunder Bay, inspiring audiences to better understand the art of Ukrainian dance and the Ukrainian heritage of our city.

As a Chaban volunteer Teaching Assistant, Holly brings her experience as an Artist Educator to rehearsals and is always eager to share her knowledge and skills providing dancer support to children and adult dancers alike.

In 2004, Holly co-wrote the script for the Chaban concert Rumpelstiltsky, humorously entwining this folktale into a Ukrainian concert, and taking on the lead role. Almost every year since then her expertise in script, acting, and stage development has been utilized and appreciated.

Holly's resourcefulness and imagination have helped the group to stretch limited resources. The care that she takes in researching cultural details and historical facts has helped Chaban present the art of Ukrainian culture with pride.

Krysta Logozzo Daniele



After graduating with a Business Degree from Lakehead University in 2002 Krysta Logozzo Daniele focused her talents and skills into Leadership Thunder Bay, a one-year program focused on community issues for emerging leaders. During this she worked with a team of fellow volunteers on various projects developing her project management, communications, and community leadership skills.

After finishing the program Krysta divided her time between volunteering with GenNext, a group aligned with United Way Thunder Bay that encourages volunteerism among future leaders and SHIFT

Thunder Bay, a network for the young professional.

In 2012, enjoying professional success at St Joseph's Care Group, Krysta was invited to join Port Arthur Rotary. In her first year she was selected to become a Paul Harris Fellow, an almost unprecedented feat for a new Rotarian and was selected as Club President in 2019/20.

During her term as President, she was faced with the impact of the pandemic but as many other clubs closed their doors, under Krysta's leadership, Port Arthur Rotary migrated to virtual meetings. She managed this with tact, understanding, and respect for all Rotary members, not all of whom were comfortable with new technology.

Krysta has encouraged the expansion and use of technology, enabling guest speakers, including Senators, former Premiers, authors, and Indigenous speakers to use the Zoom platform. Due in no small part to Krysta's leadership, Port Arthur Rotary not only survived the pandemic but became stronger and more innovative than it was before.

Krysta is described as a smart, hardworking, and thoughtful professional volunteer, who shares her time, energy, and skills generously with all the Thunder Bay based organizations of which she has been a part. Everyone who has volunteered with her over her long career as a community leader has experienced examples of her leadership, innovation, and dedication. She has touched the lives of countless people in the community.

Ann McGoey

In 1983 Ann McGoey, along with her four children: Eric, Maureen, Conor and Warren, began volunteering at Fort William Historical Park (Old Fort William as it was known then). Together they assisted in educational programming, provided entertainment and customer service to locals as well as tourists from around the world. During their time at Old Fort William, Ann and her family would sew in the Tailor's Shop, bead, and decorate pouches to be traded during the Fort's



Rendezvous event, and assist in the Historic Trades Square including the Blacksmith Shop and Canoe Shed.

Visitors venturing to the farm would be able to find Ann with a smile on her face and ready to share her knowledge and skills. Ann's children became very adept at role playing and loved interacting with visitors, especially other children. They were not fooled by questions regarding television or modern travel, and would unflinchingly remain in their historic persona.

Their contribution to the Living History Program enriched the experience of many visitors until 1991. 30 years later Ann has returned with her grandchildren who all have a passion for historical re-enactment. Showcasing the unique cultural history of our region through heritage food, traditional games, song, and dance. Ann's grandchildren also interpret to visitors of various ages and nationalities, speaking French to francophone visitors.

Ann's belief in building confidence and knowledge through active interpreting and skill sharing has been put into practice over many years and her commitment to Fort William Historical Park has encouraged and inspired the next generation of volunteers. She aims to show them that giving back to the community can be fun and educational, and she hopes to instill in her grandchildren the rewards of giving one's time and talent to others.

Ann and her family are an asset to the Volunteer Program at Fort William Historical Park and to the City of Thunder Bay.

Robyn McWatch



Over the past 15 years Robyn McWatch has been donating her time, energy, and compassion to our community by volunteering to support those served by the Children's Aid Society of The District of Thunder Bay (TBCAS).

Starting as a Recreation Buddy, Robyn took siblings on weekly outings. Providing them with low-cost, engaging, healthy, age-appropriate community activities, and instilled the values of recreation pursuits as a benefit to child or youth.

Following this, Robyn moved into the role of Volunteer Driver, helping many children, youth, and families to and from important appointments, saving countless bus trips for those served over her many years in this role. Robyn states that she was 'paid' by feedback from the children and youth like 'are you coming next week?' and 'I told my mom you were nice.'

Robyn's favorite volunteer role at TBCAS is her baby cuddling position. The additional extensive training required did not discourage her from excitedly starting her mentoring shifts in this position. Robyn strictly follows the policies and guidelines governing the TBCAS volunteer cuddlers during her four-hours shifts, mainly at the NICU or Pediatric

floors at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. She will often take more than one four-hour shift in a 24-hour period, happy to extend her love and compassion to the newborns and children and treats this position with the respect it deserves.

Throughout Robyn's volunteer tenure with TBCAS she was also a palliative care giver to several close members of her family, while attending post-secondary schooling and raising her daughter Chyniel. The cycle of volunteering continues with Chyniel who gives her time to special events such as the Holiday Hamper Program, which Robyn considers her best legacy.

Robyn's altruistic act of giving without expectation of remuneration is the definition of volunteerism, and she is truly a Citizen of Exceptional Achievement.

Sharon Otway

The Senior's Income Tax Program, a free service offered to low-income seniors in our community, has benefitted from Sharon Otway donating her time since 2001. Starting out at the Herb Carroll Centre, Sharon has grown with the program over the years, and she can be considered a 'guru' of income tax!

Sharon took on the role of Group Trainer, using her knowledge and expertise to help train any new volunteers joining the team, adapting the CRA training material to focus solely on seniors. This ensured that the volunteer team was able to offer a level of service second-to-none to community members who depend on it.



The program is currently hosted solely from the Thunder Bay 55 Plus Centre and while Sharon has handed the training component on, she still offers her assistance with extra learning and is only a phone call away. She can also be found taking on two shifts per week during the eight-week Income Tax Clinic each spring. Sharon has been a person at the centre of the program's growth and the fact that it remains an amazing community resource.

When the pandemic hit Sharon opted to share her time and talents with the Lakehead Social Planning Council Income Tax Program. In this way other low-income clients in the community benefit from her assisting with hundreds of returns yearly.

If anyone has a need for a beautiful purse, some unique jewelry, or an exquisite piece of pottery, the Hogarth Riverview Manor Gift Shop would probably be the place to visit. You could find Sharon working in the store, and the beautiful merchandise for sale may well be a result of one of the buying trips that she also assists with.

Whether to enjoy an Easter High Tea or a pickerel dinner, the Riverside Café at the 55 Plus Centre is a popular destination for many. Sharon spent two years on the Food Program

Board. All of this on top of volunteering as a Scout Leader when her son was younger, even once driving a group of boys to the East Coast for a Jamboree!

Sharon has epitomized, for many years, the true spirit of Thunder Bay.

Al Smith

Al Smith has been consistently dedicating his time and energy to volunteering in many capacities for over 30 years.

‘Freemasonry is the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world. Its members share a common goal of helping each other become better men. Its body of knowledge and system of ethics is based on the belief that each man has a responsibility to improve himself while being devoted to his family, faith, country, and fraternity.’



Since 1984 Al has been the embodiment of the Masonic ideals, ensuring he is a member who makes calls and visits to any other members who are ill or distressed, offering compassion, and concern for their well-being.

Al also dedicates his time to being a Board Member of the Lakehead Shrine Club. The Lakehead Shrine Club’s Mission is to provide free hospital care for children with orthopedic and neuromusculoskeletal conditions and injuries, burns, spinal cord injuries, cleft lip and palate, and other complex care needs at one of the many Shriner’s hospitals for children.

The fundraising necessary to achieve this goal will often find Al participating in several roles. He can be found selling raffle tickets, calendars, Christmas cakes, cookies, and Vidalia onions to eager members of the public. He is also regularly involved in events such as the ‘Parade of Lights’ and the ‘Santa Claus Parade’, driving the mini-cars, creating smiles on faces of both children and adults alike.

As a member and volunteer of the 55 Plus Centre since 1996, Al sits on the Board of Directors for the Fix-It Shop and can also be found working in the kitchen, washing dishes, and generally contributing to the success of the Centre.

Since he was a young man Al has been attending the Lakeview Presbyterian Church and despite his busy volunteer schedule, he continues to be an active member to this day.

As a valuable contributor to the community for over 30 years, Al truly believes in giving back.

June Wozny



The Telephone Assurance Program is a valuable service provided by the 55 Plus Centre that enables volunteers to place phone calls to vulnerable seniors to check in on their health and safety. This can be an essential part of assisting them in keeping an independent lifestyle by reducing isolation and loneliness through friendship and socialization.

June Wozny has been a part of this service for over 20 years of volunteerism. Over the years she has taken one day out of her week to touch base with many older clients, developing friendships and providing companionship to many isolated adults in our community.

When the average number of clients is one per volunteer, June has been known to be in contact with up to eight clients at any one time. When June herself was not in good health she still ensured that her clients were called, demonstrating her commitment to this position.

Many residents of Dawson Court have been the recipients of June's time when she volunteered as a friendly visitor. Every Wednesday June visits Hogarth Riverview Manor Long-term Care Home and can spend time with up to three people on each occasion.

June's commitment to volunteering does not end there. June can often be found lending her time to the Magnus Theatre, the Cambrian Players, helping with charity bingos, assisting at various legion functions, making Canada Day special for everyone, and helping with the children's programs at Redwood School. Any spare time that she may have is spent creatively, working in her vegetable and flower gardens, sewing, baking, and enjoying various crafts.

June is described as an 'angel' and her kindness over the years has been so valuable to many older adults in our community. Joan is a truly worthy recipient of the Spirit of Thunder Bay Award.

2023 Youth Award Recipients

Arshea Amer

From a young age in Pakistan, Arshea Amer has demonstrated selflessness and her passion for helping others. As a volunteer dental assistant helping provide free treatment to the less fortunate, and a co-conductor for laughter therapy sessions at a correctional facility, Arshea's kindness has always been apparent.

When Arshea moved to Thunder Bay she began a volunteer role with Teen Challenge, helping collect donations, enabling the charity to continue with their valuable work, providing rehabilitation opportunities to those struggling with addictions.

Since January 2020 and throughout the ups and downs of the pandemic, Arshea has volunteered with the Wayfinding service at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC). In this role she supports a positive patient experience and helps create a welcoming first impression of the hospital to all patients, visitors, and staff, as she greets and provides directions. If required Arshea will personally escort patients and visitors to their destination, call them a taxi, and deliver parcels brought in for patients to the nursing stations.

Over the last three years Arshea has shown tremendous leadership skills by joining the TBRHSC Volunteer Advisory Council and taking on the responsibility of being a Service Leader for the Wayfinding role. She shared a story reminding people that those whom we may want to help the least may be most in need of compassion and that kindness can go a long way.

Arshea is described as an extremely funny, mature, respectful, dedicated volunteer advocate making a positive difference in our community. She consistently demonstrates kindness and empathy, and her commitment to volunteering and training other volunteers, whilst balancing her busy university schedule, has not gone unnoticed.

Arshea is a great role model, not only to our youth, but to all volunteers who want to make a positive impact in our community.

Kaylee Armour

The City of Thunder Bay's Recreation and Culture Department has benefitted from Kaylee volunteering her time for just over two years, most recently with the Chippewa Summer Camps Program, contributing over 170 hours. As a high school student Kaylee was only required to complete 40 hours of volunteering but after her first summer in 2021, she was determined to attend the summer of 2022!

When working with both campers and leaders at Chippewa, Kaylee is described as going above and beyond to provide a welcoming and positive space for all campers. Without having to be asked Kaylee will consistently be the first one to step up to assist or lead an activity, always being inclusive and interacting with all campers in a respectful manner. Kaylee can consistently be relied upon to find engaging and fun ways to interact with the children, and will always gently encourage any who are hesitant to join in.



The staff at Chippewa appreciate Kaylee's dependability and willingness to help which leaves them in no doubt of her commitment. She communicates well with staff, volunteers, and campers alike, ensuring no potential problems ever escalate.

Without enthusiastic and thoughtful volunteers like Kaylee the campers at Chippewa would not enjoy the kind of service that they deserve, she is thoroughly deserving of this Youth Award. Well done, Kaylee!

Gurleen Bhullar

Having emigrated from India as a child, Gurleen Bhullar has enjoyed volunteering, in part as a way of getting to meet and know the people of Thunder Bay, and to learn about life in Canada. As a student at St. Ignatius High School, she has currently reported a total of 431 community volunteer hours despite having spent grades 9-11 learning virtually due to the pandemic.

The mission of the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association is to 'work toward a society in which all people from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds can participate fully in Canadian life, working together with respect, fairness, and acceptance. To develop community capacity, programs, and services to attract and retain immigrants.' Gurleen has contributed many hours of her time to help make this mission a reality, organizing an event to help the children of refugee families new to Thunder Bay, to meet other children and to help learn English. She has also, through this same organization, helped at a refugee family event, assisting new families meet others and build supportive connections.

In participating as part of Patty Hajdu's Youth Council, Gurleen has brought a youth perspective on challenges facing our community to our Member of Parliament and has been involved with coordinating specific events during meetings.

Gurleen's commitment to helping others can be seen with her participation in groups such as the Thunder Bay Sikh Society, Shelter House, United Way, and the Urban Abbey. In her school community at St. Ignatius, Gurleen is involved in both the Common Bonds Social Justice Club and with the BPOC (Black and People of Colour) student groups.

Her openness about her own culture, and her interest in learning about the cultures of others, is demonstrated in her participation in organizing events and through her sharing and listening to the stories of others. Those new to Canada and those who may be finding it difficult to take care of their basic needs have found assistance through Gurleen's commitment to helping others through service and support, and she is thoroughly deserving of this award.

Ryan Cebrario-Santorelli



In the summer of 2020, 10-year-old Ryan Santorelli walked into Community Spokes to fix his mountain bike and two years later he is a highly valued and integral member of this social business.

Community Spokes is for people who use or need a bicycle, providing second-hand bikes and parts, as well as the knowledge to maintain and repair them. Their retail storefront in downtown Fort William allows members of the community to use their tools and work on their bikes free of charge. In addition, they offer bike sales, rentals, a build your own bike program, skills-based workshops, recreation

therapy programming, and volunteer opportunities.

When Ryan first spent time at Community Spokes it was clear that he enjoyed working on bicycles so, with the help of his family, a weekly volunteer schedule was set up for him. Starting with simple tasks such as patching tubes, Ryan quickly acquired more advanced skills, and did not shy away from asking questions to staff and volunteers.

Ryan's contributions to Community Spokes go beyond attending volunteer shifts and completing tasks, his intentions and positive energy stand out among the bike shop community. His presence when absent is missed for its excitement, enthusiasm, and good company. His mannerisms and approach to teaching are both welcoming and friendly which creates a casual and calm environment in which people can learn and practice skills.

Ryan's no-hesitation approach to helping new people integrate into the shop, showing them the location of tools, methods of repairing their bikes, or even which used bikes are most appropriate to purchase, demonstrate his helpful attitude and enjoyment of being a part of something important to him.

His young age, neurodivergence and many challenges he has faced throughout his life have not hampered his initiative, determination, and strength of character that is evident in his participation in this community initiative.

Community Spokes enriches the life of many residents in Thunder Bay. Ryan's role and contribution is integral as a valued member amongst the staff, volunteers and patrons and everyone involved is excited to watch him grow and thrive.

Andrei Rosario



As an active member of the community, Andrei Rosario has touched our city in various capacities.

As a cadet in the Canadian Cadet Organizations, Andrei took on many leadership roles and was eventually appointed with the highest leadership appointment, Cadet Regimental Sergeant Major. Over his four years of service, he taught over 50 youths a variety of topics including leadership, music, sports (biathlon and marksmanship), and wilderness survival. Taking his experience of music gained from the Cadet Program to high school, Andrei volunteered as a Music

Instructor in St. Patrick's Reach Ahead Program from 2016-2018.

Since graduating high school and retiring from the Cadet Program, Andrei has continued his passion for community development through volunteering. He spent time as a Community Support Worker at the Urban Abbey's Emergency Shelter in 2021 and as a Research Assistant at the Students' Commission of Canada, helping with research and advocacy initiatives for empowering youth voices.

Andrei was the founder of the Confederation College Business Club, where he currently sits as President, and he is the leading force behind the club's events and activities. Throughout his time in this non-profit club, he has supported the professional development of over 20 students, assisting in clothing individuals experiencing homelessness, and raised thousands of dollars to support poverty alleviation initiatives in Thunder Bay.

Since May 2022 Andrei has served as a Director of Social Events in Confederation College's Student Association's Board of Directors, supporting over 20 events and activities while representing the student body through advocacy. Andrei also sits as Board Member of Elevate NWO and Director of Marketing in Free Your Mind, a youth-led nonprofit organization focused on promoting mental wellness in youth.

His volunteerism doesn't end there, with his becoming an Income Tax Preparer under the Canada Revenue Agency's Community Volunteer Income Tax Program. In this role he has promoted economic development whilst supporting low-income individuals and families, helping to bring back over \$25,000 to the community.

Andrei's dedication as a leader is proven by the amount of work that he has committed himself to throughout all his volunteer roles. Through his initiatives in community development and leadership, he has helped boost and increase the profile of youth in Thunder Bay, and his selfless contributions have had positive impacts on a great number of people in our community.

Being able to focus on his post-secondary studies, working three jobs and taking on many volunteering initiatives shows Andrei's immense drive and passion. His continuous hard work in various industries as a community developer, leader, and an advocate for many deserves recognition and commendation. Andrei is an inspiration to our community and future generations of youth.

Sara Sacchetti



As a student at St. Patrick High School, Sara Sacchetti has demonstrated her commitment to helping others since 2021. Many St. Pat's students have been assisted and inspired by Sara as she has volunteered her time to tutoring younger students in a range of subjects including English, Science, French and Math.

On top of assisting other students, Sara has a passion for helping the vulnerable in our community and beyond. The Golden Ticket Challenge was an idea that Sara approached her teachers with in the spring of 2022. It was an idea for a fundraiser for the Sick Kids

Foundation which was a charity dear to her heart.

The 'Charlie and Chocolate Factory' inspired challenge involved selling 5,000 bars of chocolate, 36 of which had a golden ticket for a prize. Sarah worked hard over the summer to source sponsors, prizes and organized a media campaign which led to the event being a complete success. In all \$11,000 was donated to SickKids Toronto through the sale of chocolate bars, sponsorship, and donations from the community, all of which would not have been possible without Sara's organization and management.

Caring Cards is another initiative that Sara created involving the making of beautiful Christmas cards for seniors in long-term care. The cards were made by students who could also record their work as a contribution towards their voluntary hours. This was a fun way to give back and the long-term care residents were overjoyed to receive creative, home-made greetings cards.

Sara's sense of initiative to help wherever it was needed the most, and her assistance with a range of worthwhile causes is very impressive, and her support and dedication has touched the lives of many.

Viktoriya Dyukaryeva

Viktoriya Dyukaryeva has been involved with Chaban Ukrainian Dance Group, primarily as a dancer, since she moved to Canada from Ukraine in 2014.

Viktoriya started teaching at Chaban 6 months before the pandemic began and when classes had to move online, her enthusiasm and commitment did not waver. Her classes continued via Zoom with her pet dogs and cats entertaining the children taking part. Her organization and improvisation skills came to the forefront which made class time just as productive online as in-person.



Now that classes are back in-person Viktoriya's energy and enthusiasm has only continued to improve the children's self-confidence and self-esteem, their physical flexibility and fitness, and their ability to develop relationships.

Since 2021 Viktoriya has held Head Instructor positions for Parent & Me and Sonechko (ages 4-5). Viktoriya continues with her commitment to Chaban despite attending university full time and working. She currently dances at the Ensemble level, instructing a group of small children and assisting with teens and pre-teens. With four of her dancers having Ukrainian as a first language, Viktoriya can converse fluently with them, also helping to familiarize English speakers with the language.

Viktoriya is an enthusiastic learner, eager to teach her new skills to others and inspiring young dancers to want to learn, promote and share Ukrainian heritage through dance. In addition to assisting in the development of the children, their performances provide great joy and amazement. This year the children she teaches will be performing at Chaban's concert in May and at the Thunder Bay Folklore Festival.

The emotional strength and self-confidence that it takes to be teaching your peers, along with the physical stamina and organization skills that Viktoriya demonstrates in her volunteer role makes her more than deserving of this award.