

MEDIA RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: February 16, 2017

TITLE: PETROLIA MAYOR CELEBRATES VOLUNTEERISM

Petrolia, ON- Mayor John McCharles and Town of Petrolia staff were pleased to honour all Town volunteers last night in the annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. More than one hundred people attended the event at the Petrolia Legion and were treated to dinner and an evening of celebration of their efforts for the Town. The value for every one hundred volunteers is just over the equivalent of \$350,000.00 in man hours.

Service Club Presidents, Town Committees, Victoria Playhouse Petrolia volunteers, and many other groups were recognized at the event. The evening culminated with Mayor McCharles awarding the Volunteer of the Year Awards in four categories, and one special recognition. The four categories have been designed to cover as many of the volunteer categories as possible, with a criteria set for each one to assist the selection committee in making the final decision.

The 'Volunteer of the Year 2016 – Sports and Recreation' was presented to Don Harding. He is a very willing volunteer with the Petrolia Minor Hockey Association, as a board member, manager, trainer, and registrar. He also volunteered many years with Petrolia Minor Soccer and was a coach and board member of that organization as well. He works with the Petrolia and District Figure Skating Club to help decorate for their annual ice carnival. He also drives the float for Santa Claus in the annual Petrolia parade.

The second award was presented to Carol Watt in the category of 'Volunteer of the Year 2016 – Community Service'. This award looks at an individual who has many different volunteer interests. Carol is known as a very dedicated Lambton Central Petrolia Optimist Club member. She is also the Club's treasurer, and chairs many fundraising event throughout the year including the Rubber Duck Race, 50/50 draws and several more. Carol is a past president an active volunteer with all Club events throughout the year, and she takes care of the gardens at Kerr Park during the summer. She also volunteers for St. Paul's United Church where she sits on the finance committee, and is the "Past Chair". She contributes to the organization and execution of fundraisers at the Church including the Quarter Auctions, dinners and talent auctions. In addition, she helps manage Facebook business pages for both organizations.

The third award, 'Volunteer of the Year 2016 – Community Partnership' was presented to Jane and Bill Cadman. This is the first time that this award has been presented to a couple, but one could not be recognized without the other. Both tireless Rotary volunteers for many events including Dinner of the Month Draws, Farmers' Market 50/50, Christmas for Everyone Luncheon, and Jane as a past president solidifies their community commitment. In addition, both Bill and Jane are avid C.E.E. Hospital supporters. Both volunteer for Operation Clean Sweep every spring as well as assisting with Blood Donor Clinics. Jane is a member of the C.E.E. Hospital Auxiliary and volunteers at the annual Strawberry Social. She is currently the Hospital Auxiliary South West Region – Regional Chair.

The fourth of the evening, 'Volunteer of the Year 2016 – Arts and Culture' was presented to Diane O'Dell and Ruth Brown. The second award to recognize two people was given to these ladies in recognition of their roles as the founding directors of the Lambton Youth Choir, and for their multiple volunteer roles with the Victoria Playhouse Petrolia in billeting actors and crew members, providing rehearsal snacks, and being the official photographers for all the shows. Ruth Brown was fondly

remembered for her role as a Sunday School teacher, and as a member of the Deacon's Board at the First Baptist Church, and assisted many students over the years to complete post-secondary education. Both ladies are retired teachers, and Diane volunteers regularly with youth in the community, and provides opportunities for exchange students to be involved with the choir. Both ladies travelled extensively across Canada and the United States with the Lambton Youth Choir, where they left a legacy of kindness, and memories of a polite group of people from Petrolia and area.

A special recognition award was handed out to a long-standing volunteer in the town of Petrolia. Doug Clark is a very active Rotary volunteer, and he is known for helping with the Rotary Jazz event, the Dinner of the Month fundraiser, a caretaker at Woodland Park, and a past president. Doug is also the chairperson of the Petrolia Community Fund and works tirelessly with the Sarnia Community Foundation to help enhance the Fund, and offer micro grants each year. Doug has also been a member of the Oil Heritage District Community Centre Advisory Committee, and the Municipal Audit Committee. Doug is a retired engineer and retired financial planner who enjoys the outdoors and hiking our trail system.

Mayor McCharles couldn't say enough to thank each of the volunteers saying that "...our Town is great because of all of you...saying thank you doesn't seem like enough for all that you give to our community. We are truly blessed."

Each of the honourees was awarded a framed certificate from the Mayor, and a glass award with the Town's clock tower on the face, and bouquets of flowers.

-end-

Attachment: Photo: From left to right: Doug Clark, Don Harding, Diane O'Dell, Carol Watt, Jane & Bill Cadman

For more information:

John McCharles

Mayor

Town of Petrolia

411 Greenfield Street

P.O. Box 1270

Petrolia, Ontario, N0N 1R0

Phone: (519)882-2350

E-mail: jmccharles@petrolia.ca