18th Annual Community Spirit Awards
Oakville thrives because of the very special contributions of community champions.

Tonight we are celebrating these champions for their commitment to making our community strong. They embody the true spirit of Oakville!

On behalf of the Town of Oakville, congratulations to all the nominees and recipients!
# Table of Contents

Greetings from the Mayor ........................................ 5
Steering Committee Members ................................. 6
Selection Committee Members .............................. 7
Schedule for the Evening ................................... 7

**Community Spirit Award Nominees:**

- Access Award .................................................. 8
- Arts Award ...................................................... 11
- Group Volunteer Award ................................ 13
- Heritage Award ................................................ 21
- Individual Volunteer Award .............................. 22
- Senior Award .................................................. 37
- Youth Award ................................................... 41

Acknowledgments ............................................. 45
Award Sponsors ................................................ 47
Greetings from the Mayor

Community spirit is alive and well here in Oakville. It’s a big part of what makes Oakville a great place to live, work and raise a family.

On behalf of Town Council and Oakville residents, welcome to the 18th Community Spirit Awards, an evening to celebrate exceptional volunteerism and outstanding community service. Tonight, we honour the individuals and groups who have contributed countless hours and tireless efforts to enhance the social fabric of Oakville.

This year’s nominees demonstrate the best of what our town is all about and the generosity of spirit that thrives here. Thank you to those who share their time, talent, enthusiasm and leadership to make Oakville more livable for everyone by supporting so many important activities across town.

I would also like to acknowledge those who took the time to nominate and recognize the inspirational acts of service of tonight’s nominees and thank our generous sponsors who help make this evening a great success every year.

In appreciation,

Mayor Rob Burton, Town of Oakville
Steering Committee Members

Nancy Beddoe & Julie Pennal, Committee Co-Chairs
Recreation and Culture

Jim Black
Recreation and Culture

Janine Ivings
Recreation and Culture

Mary Lou Paolucci-Lepore
Recreation and Culture

Diana McCoy
Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts

Darryl McWilliam
Recreation and Culture

Nabeel Rahman
Recreation and Culture

Heather Salema
Recreation and Culture

Michelle Tadique
Strategy, Policy and Communications
Selection Committee Members

Mayor Rob Burton, Chair
Councillor Ray Chisholm
Councillor Marc Grant
Cindy Heinz
Judy Lilly
Dasha Shalimo
David White

Schedule for the Evening

Master of Ceremonies
Chris Mei, television host, The Weather Network

6:30 p.m.
Cash Bar/ Reception

7 p.m.
Introductory Remarks
Greetings from Mayor Rob Burton
Award Presentations
Closing Remarks
Community Spirit Award Nominees

★ Access Award ★

Recognizes outstanding individuals, businesses or organizations that have made or are making a significant or ongoing voluntary contribution, beyond legislated requirements, to the well-being and advancement of people with disabilities.

Carol Gall

Nominated by Bob Pawliw

Carol would say we are only as good as each of us together, and her commitment to participate in activities that promote a feeling of community is outstanding. For the last three years, Carol has volunteered at the River Oaks Community Centre working with people who would not be able to be physically active without her help. She has made a significant and lasting impact on their lives. She takes initiative to assist instructors and participants, comes in early to help set up, and stays late to put away equipment. She also assists Personal Training staff with a client who has low-vision on a weekly basis for two years. She has developed a trusting relationship with the client while helping him navigate the exercise equipment for his training.
sessions. Carol also gives her time to support a community member who is in her mid-90s, meeting her every week during the winter months at Trafalgar Park Community Centre for a “walk and talk” session to maintain her activity. Carol has gone above and beyond to help out wherever there is a need and makes wonderful connections with everyone she meets. Her friendly and approachable nature, along with her sense of humour, are appreciated by all members and make everyone feel welcome.

**Patrick Lee and Judith Elaine Hung**  
*Nominated by Penny Pei*

Judith and Patrick run a hugely successful parent-run group called Project Autism. The amazing part of this group is that it welcomes more than kids with autism, but every child, youth and adult with a disability is welcome. They have offered more than 700 programs for free to parents, without a dollar of support from registering as a not-for-profit organization. Why? To stay pure to the mission of helping the community and being community-based. The couple’s efforts are tireless. In addition to running the program, they also manage many calls a week from parents who have received new diagnoses. They spend mornings, nights and weekends without pay or credit, to support this community. Their passion, drive, and never give up attitude is beyond impressive. It’s an honour to know them, and an honour to serve and help the community with them.
Jude Smalley
Nominated by Dalia El-Farra

At an impressively young age (8!) Jude is already making an impact on his community through the important work he does with charities that help individuals with disabilities. In 2013, Jude’s grandfather sustained a spinal cord injury resulting in paralysis from the shoulders down. Wanting to help, Jude was inspired to make ornaments to raise money for causes that help people with spinal cord injury. In 2017, Jude made and sold holiday ornaments and donated all the money to charity. He filled 100 orders for his family and friends raising over $900 for Spinal Cord Injury Ontario (SCIO). His fundraising efforts were recognized in SCIO’s Outspoken! Magazine, by Member of Parliament Pam Damoff and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau! In 2018, Jude once again wanted to help others and give back to the community. His hard work in creating holiday ornaments resulted in Jude raising $1,775 which he donated to CharterAbility, a charity dedicated to providing accessible, recreational boating programs to people of all ages and abilities at no cost. At such a young age, Jude exemplifies the true meaning of community spirit, channeling his empathy and compassion to enhance the lives of others. His commitment to the community is exceptional!
★ Arts Award ★

Oakville Beaver

Recognizes an individual or organization that, through their volunteerism, has contributed to nurturing and enhancing the arts in Oakville.

Amy McKenzie
Nomination by Bernadette Ward

Oakville Improv Theatre Company (OITC) is more than entertainment, it is a community. The driving force behind this organization of friends, family, students, volunteers, teachers and community partners is Amy. She has worked tirelessly to build awareness, gain support from town arts groups and local businesses, and engage Oakville residents. OITC was established to promote improvisation as an art form and provide high quality improvisation performances for the Oakville community. Amy’s work to develop OITC into a regular educational and entertainment entity is unique, as there are no other theatres in Halton that use improvisational theatre as an artistic practice. With Amy’s vision, OITC’s volunteer leadership team organizes regular training and workshop opportunities for the community, and has built a strong team of 33 local volunteer performers who entertain audiences through three key programs: a weekly evening drop-in workshop and show at Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre (QEPCCC);
monthly family-oriented TheatreSports™ shows at QEPCCC and monthly shows at the Moonshine Café. Amy has placed Oakville’s improv scene on the world stage by collaborating with neighbouring communities, bringing talented professionals in from Toronto to further educate in this art form, and sending students to participate in Canadian and international festivals.

Melissa Stolarz
Nominated by Thomas Wadsworth

Melissa has been an active contributor to the Oakville community since 2011 by using her musical background to support various local groups and organizations. Melissa was the official anthem singer and performer for the Oakville Blades hockey team during the 2011–2013 season. Her performances led to her participation as a singer for the Nutrience Oakville Marathon, tree lighting ceremonies in Oakville and Burlington, and the Oakville Longhorns games. She also brings the power of music to Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital (OTMH) patients with annual performances during Christmas as well as a special Mother’s Day performance to OTMH’s long-term care patients. This event features 25 young musicians from the Oakville School of Music and Performing Arts (OSMPA) and 20 patients coming together for an hour of music. It was so well-received that Melissa now arranges weekly performances by students at the hospital. In 2019, Melissa founded a not-for-profit organization called the Oakville School of Music and Performing Arts (OSMPA) Foundation to continue the development of the musical program in hopes of reaching more patients in hospital across
Ontario. She has given her time above and beyond the performances, with the development of the website, taking time to connect with other Oakville schools and groups, and leading a volunteer team that helps her manage performers, events and marketing. Melissa is a true leader in the development of the arts and her successful programs positively impact our community.

★ Group Volunteer Award ★

FirstOntario
CREDIT UNION

Recognizes a group of three or more individuals who have come together to volunteer their time toward a shared goal, activity or event involving leadership, innovation and creativity. Activities or events can benefit all ages.

Corporations for Community Connections
Nominated by Kate Milner

Access to computers is essential for individuals and communities to be successful. Corporations for Community Connections (CFCC) Inc. is a registered charity, founded in Oakville by Siemens employees who have a deep passion for social development and improving the quality of life for Oakville citizens by providing access to refurbished laptops to residents in need. On their own, these employees devised an unparalleled process for efficiently refurbishing decommissioned corporate computers,
donating over 3,000 laptops to community groups since 2010. Year-after-year, CFCC is called on for their tremendous community support and in 2018 hosted their fourth “Hope For the Holiday” workshop. The workshop spanned over two days, where 32 Siemens employees and more than 30 high school students worked to refurbish 211 laptops for distribution to local charities and First Nations schools. CFCC’s president and co-founder, Philip Schaus shared that, “Selling computers at fair market value doesn’t help people who are struggling to house and feed their family. Trashing old computers does nothing to connect these people to our digital world. CFCC has the potential to have a tremendous impact on social development, turning trash into treasure, providing access to technology and opening digital doors of opportunity.”

**Elder Technology Assistance Group**  
*Nominated by Paul Smith*

Founded by Chris Bint in 2008, Elder Technology Assistance Group (ETAG) focuses on helping older adults better understand today’s technology. With locations in Oakville, Brampton and Mississauga, ETAG operates solely through its roster of dedicated volunteers who provide free technology education programming and workshops for older adults. As a registered charity and leader in senior adult education, ETAG’s positive impact in Oakville and beyond is fostered through key partnerships with local volunteers, research facilities, industry, academic, community and non-profit organizations, to provide accessible technology support programs. One key partnership is ETAG’s work with The Centre for Education and Training to offer its FREE Volunteer
Technology Education Program to adults 55+, enabling ETAG to reach older adult and volunteer communities in Oakville and beyond. Thanks to the efforts of dozens of ETAG’s passionate and enthusiastic volunteers, elderly members of the community can enhance their technological skills, feel confident and empowered to learn and contribute to today’s digital world.

**Food for Life Volunteer Group at 271 Kerr Street**  
*Nomination by Donna Slater*

Food brings people together and the Food for Life (FFL) Volunteer Group at the John Rhodes Senior Residence is dedicated to supporting residents in need. Each week, this group made up of volunteers from St. Peter and St. Paul Coptic Orthodox Church in Oakville, give their time to deliver fresh and healthy food options to seniors that live at 271 Kerr Street. This program, running for the last five years, is integral to improving the quality of life for residents, many who live in isolation, or do not have the income or ability to get out and purchase fresh food. For a few hours each week, volunteers gather in the community room where all residents are welcome to pick up fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy and meat. Special food packages are also delivered to those unable to come to the community room due to health concerns. FFL also offer events for the seniors in this building to encourage social connections, and to foster a sense of inclusion and belonging. Thanks to their compassion, initiative and dedication, the FFL Volunteer Group is helping to break down barriers of health inequities and bring people together to support an inclusive community for all.
Friendship Luncheon Volunteer Team Colborne Senior Centre

Nominated by Lorna Van de Mosselaer

The Colborne Friendship Luncheon team are an inspiring group of individuals who tirelessly provide weekly social opportunities, nutritious meals, physical fitness, safe transportation and most importantly, an emotional connection for Oakville’s isolated and lonely seniors. This very special program takes an army of volunteers to make it work. Each week one volunteer calls each client and has a visit, and another volunteer then coordinates drivers to shuttle participants to and from their home to the Centre. These drivers are diligently available every week, throughout the year, visiting and talking with clients who they truly consider friends. Clients feel comfortable sharing special moments, health concerns and family celebrations, and feel heard and cared about. A team of hostesses and café volunteers plan and offer a wonderful luncheon every Wednesday at the Centre that includes welcome hugs at the front door, piano playing and sing-alongs, and a hot delicious meal served to clients. There is fitness, card games, lots of laughter and beautiful friendships fostered. A program participant says, “I love it here! The friendship luncheon program makes me feel like Queen Elizabeth. I couldn’t be treated any better…even if I was the Queen. It is so nice and welcoming at the Centre. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I don’t know what I would do without my Wednesday luncheon.”
Gemma and Matt Hagerman  
*Nominated by Anna Williamson*

For many families in Oakville, Christmas isn’t always the most wonderful time of the year. Gemma, together with her husband Matt, rally the community every year to collect donations of gifts to bring the spirit of Christmas to families in need across Oakville. Gemma began this endeavour eight years ago. Through her many years of volunteering and working with children through ArtHouse, Gemma has met many families from all walks of life. These experiences, together with her generous spirit and compassion, led Gemma to work with others in the community to collect donations. At the start, Gemma and Matt were able to provide gifts for two to three families. Thanks to their continued efforts, 35 families received a variety of gifts including toys, shoes, clothing and gift cards to local retailers and pharmacies this past Christmas.

Hockey Cares  
*Nominated by Jennifer Moshtagh*

Hockey Cares, an initiative that uses hockey as a common bond to foster reconciliation in action, is entering its third year as a cultural exchange program for youth aged 13–15 from remote Indigenous and urban communities. Currently, Hockey Cares operates under the umbrella of True North Aid. In the summer, youth from Attawapiskat travel to Oakville to meet their new friends and of course, play hockey! During their visit, they learn about the opportunities available for post-secondary education, meet with Indigenous elders, business leaders and
mentors living in the GTA, as well as take part in a variety of tourist activities. To prepare for the arrival of youth from Attawapiskat, urban youth participants and their families take part in a cultural awareness session taught by Indigenous elders. In the winter, youth from Oakville travel to Attawapiskat and are reunited with their friends and once again meet on the ice for a hockey tournament. The urban youth experience life and traditions of their host community, including making Indigenous crafts, commemorating Memorial Day and traveling to James Bay. Hockey Cares recognizes the challenges facing youth in remote Northern communities and aims to create lasting friendships for all participants and their families, through the connection over this much-loved sport.

**Mississauga Indoor/International Football/Fitness Association (MIFA)**

*Nominated by Melissa Stolarz*

Established in 2013, MIFA (Mississauga Indoor/International Football/Fitness Association) has been a community-oriented program and a leader in building opportunities for youth, men and women to play football. MIFA runs thanks to a dedicated group of volunteer coaches and executive team that have worked to build accessible football programs. They established the MIFA Oakville Longhorns Football, whose competitive season runs from May to August each year. This semi-pro organization gives men the opportunity to play the sport competitively as part of the Northern Football Conference. Without this team, men in Oakville and surrounding communities would not have the opportunity to play football.
at this level. MIFA also established the province’s first-ever women’s tackle football team, attracting international teams to play right here in Oakville. MIFA’s efforts to promote and celebrate the sport of football goes beyond Canadian borders with its annual International Bowl Football Conference at the Bronte Athletic Field. Teams from the United States and Mexico are invited to compete against MIFA teams and is an essential event for the organization in developing the sport and creating a stronger rapport for women and men in football.

**Oakville Sea Cadet Parent Committee**  
*Nominated by Javier DelOlmo*

The Oakville Sea Cadet Parent Committee members are dedicated volunteers who aim to enrich the lives of 50 youth (aged 12–18) from the Oakville community. The committee, who are parents of Cadets in the Oakville Sea Cadet Corp., give their time selflessly to arrange fun activities, fundraising initiatives, awards and more, while overseeing all of the behind-the-scenes work that goes into running a community youth group. These parents go above and beyond what is needed and without their efforts, additional demands would be placed on the officer group, whose main function is working with cadets to support and develop the Corps values of teaching good citizenship, physical fitness, seamanship, commitment, loyalty, self-discipline, honesty/integrity, and respect. With the committee’s help, the Scuba Familiarization Dives held at the Dive Academy, introduce youth to the wonders of scuba diving—an activity that many kids may not have exposure
to otherwise. Another example is the promotion of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, an international award that allows young people to determine what they are passionate about, regardless of their background, culture or access to resources. These programs are just a few examples of the many ways the parent committee helps support and offers enriching experiences for youth in the Oakville Sea Cadet Corp.

**Zonta Club of Oakville**  
*Nominated by Erick Vidal*

The Zonta Club of Oakville is part of Zonta International, a global organization of professionals that empower women worldwide through service and advocacy. Founded in 1973, the Zonta Club of Oakville is made up of a small group of vibrant female volunteers who work together to assist women in Halton and internationally through various service, advocacy and education projects. The club’s service efforts include fundraising activities to support local charities including the Oakville Hospital Foundation, Halton Women’s Place, the Women’s Centre of Halton, Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Services (SAVIS), Home Suite Hope, Foundation for Cancer Wellness, Wellspring Centre and Kerr Street Ministries. One example of the club’s service projects includes the creation of birthing kits to assist women in Africa who do not have immediate access to hospitals and medical services. Closer to home, the club has raised $25,000 to purchase assorted supplies to assemble 100 “dignity bags” distributed by SAVIS of Halton to victims of human trafficking in the Halton area. Recent advocacy efforts have included support of the You Are Not Alone Program and Zonta Says No
to Violence Campaign, with education programs including the annual Young Women in Public Affairs Award for local high school students and Sheridan College scholarships for women returning to school.

★ Heritage Award ★

Genworth Canada

Recognizes an individual or organization that has made an outstanding contribution to Oakville by aiding in the preservation and celebration of Oakville’s natural, built or cultural heritage.

Marianne Hawthorne
Nominated by Andrea Stewart

Marianne’s infectious enthusiasm inspires us to help create her magic. Marianne, with her great organizational skills and engaging personality, heads up the Events Committee and has done so for the past 25 years. Whether the Oakville Historical Society Mayor’s Picnic, the annual potluck dinner for the AGM, yard sale or Christmas party, Marianne and her team spring into action. Planning the annual Mayor’s Picnic takes place over the course of a year and includes musical performances, involvement from Police and Fire departments,
Scottish Country Dancers and other entertainers. Marianne and her crew of two, Donna and Carroll, perform small miracles every year to ensure the success of this event. The Annual Yard Sale Fundraiser is another major undertaking. Somehow what seems impossible is accomplished and everything miraculously has been sold or distributed to various charities around town. Marianne is an enthusiastic, dedicated and long-time supporter of heritage in Oakville, and is a long-time member of the Oakville Historical Society and former President of the Friends of the Society, where she has spearheaded many programs. Her tireless efforts, enthusiasm and energy is incredible!

★ Individual Volunteer Award ★

Recognizes an individual who has made an outstanding volunteer contribution towards improving the well-being of Oakville residents of any age group.

Matthew Aslett
Nominated by Majd Shoufany

Matthew Aslett has volunteered at St. John Paul II (SJPII) Catholic Elementary School for the past eight years as a Boys and Girls Soccer Coach, Academic Team Challenge Advisor, and Youth Mentor. In this time, he has coordinated learning and empowerment programs that have directly impacted over
300 students at SJPII. After graduating from SJPII in 2011, Matthew has returned each year to volunteer. His outstanding contribution is evident with over 900 cumulative hours of volunteer efforts to enhance the well-being of Oakville students from 10 to 14 years old. Through the soccer program, Matthew works with students to design physical literacy sessions, promote the exchange of best practices, and guide students to pursue leadership roles outside the classroom. Matthew has independently organized over 20 soccer festivals to promote school spirit and showcase teamwork with over 270 cumulative teams from each gender and over 3,500 cumulative participants. He takes pride in his role, always with a smile on his face because he truly loves what he does and will go out of his way to help anyone that needs assistance. The kids look up to him as a role model to achieve success and learn.

Roger Balech
Nominated by Nicholas Pye

Roger Balech has been an Oakville resident for over 20 years. During this time he has had a profound impact on hundreds of youth in the community. Roger has been teaching physics and mathematics with the Halton Catholic District School Board for 16 years at Holy Trinity. He has given countless volunteer hours serving as a mentor for the First Robotics Team, Tronic Titans and running programs and other workshops at the Oakville Public Library to support the STEAM and Robotics interests for youth and teens in the community. Roger’s enthusiasm is palatable—if you didn’t have an interest in robotics, science, or technology before, you will after talking with him. The student mentors
he works with to bring robotics to the community are able to guide and empower program participants. Roger’s commitment to being involved in the community and volunteering his time is extraordinary, inspiring, and has a lasting ripple effect that will continue introducing kids to STEAM concepts now and down the road.

Janet Bedford
*Nominated posthumously by Jeannie Bugiardini*

On February 27, 2019, Oakville lost a shining community champion. Janet Bedford was an active volunteer in Oakville and Bronte for more than 25 years. She has supported and volunteered for countless community events including Canada Day, Bronte Christmas Tree Lighting, Oakville Santa Claus Parade, Salmon Run, Polar Bear Dip, Remembrance Day, small business awards, Blakelock High School events, and the list goes on. She was a volunteer for the Bronte BIA, Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Club, May Court, and volunteer photographer for snapd and Oakvillenews.org. Her two biggest contributions were connecting people in the community and photographing and recording events. Janet lit up a room, not just with the flash of her camera, but with her smile and warmth. She knew everyone and loved each community member and would go out of her way to meet people at each event. She had a knack for getting people together and she would often connect people to businesses, groups or agencies with a “tell them I sent you,” because that meant something. Janet was an abundance of energy. She was unstoppable. Her passion was her community and her people. Very few people in this world gave as selflessly as Janet did. She had so much love and is greatly missed.
Catherine Bobesich
*Nominated by Darlene Gustin*

Catherine has been an active volunteer in Oakville for decades. She has inspired and mentored many through her volunteer work with the Zonta Club of Oakville, where she recently chaired the committee hosting Canada’s largest event celebrating International Women’s Day. This event generated over $42,000 towards various needs in the community, half of which was allocated towards equipment for the new hospital. Catherine’s local achievements have been noticed and recognized internationally as well. Club members of Zonta International look up to Catherine’s work in Oakville as an example of how to increase their own quality and quantity of community support. She is believed to be a walking miracle and long-time cancer survivor who is using her time to make the world a better place. She was a regular volunteer in the formative years of Wellspring and is applauded for her efforts. Catherine is a humble and hardworking woman who cares about her community, and regularly goes above and beyond what is expected of her. We are proud to nominate Catherine for this award.

Ally Cooper
*Nominated by Sue Heddle*

For the past three years, Ally has worked tirelessly on Oakville’s Hockey Cares Project. Hockey Cares is a unique cultural exchange program which brings Bantam-level hockey players from Attawapiskat, Ontario and Oakville together for annual hockey tournaments hosted in each community.
Ally goes above and beyond, providing countless hours of community and family outreach, and leveraging her expertise in multimedia, event planning and project management to raise awareness of Hockey Cares. In fact, Hockey Cares was the first project to receive funding from the Gord Downie/Chanie Wenjack Fund. The Prime Minister of Canada has made reconciliation a national priority. Ally supports that priority and is dedicated to building stronger relationships between the two cultures. Oakville’s flag is proudly displayed at Attawpiskat First Nations Elementary School. She has opened lines of communication between Oakville Indigenous mentors, business leaders, and the hockey community with at-risk Attawpiskat youth and their parents. She carries the true heartbeat of the Hockey Cares Project and her resourcefulness and dedication have made her a valuable asset in helping to keep the project moving forward and on track.

Dennis Ford
Nominate by Jasmine V and Ljiljana Tiric

Dennis volunteers his time playing piano and singing at the Oakville Hospital and seniors residences. His beautiful music brightens the day of all who come into contact with him. According to Borko Tiric, “when my father was fighting his battle with cancer, Dennis’ music would always cheer me up through the tough times.” The smiles he brings to people’s lives is very evident and we thank him for what he gives back to the community.
Joel Hamilton

Nominated by Matthew Foxall

Four years ago, Joel suffered a major stroke which changed his life, leaving him homeless with little income. Calling a local parking lot home, Joel found support through local residents and slowly allowed them to get him the help he needed. Joel is now living in an apartment close to Kerr Street Mission (KSM) with support from the Ontario Disability Support Program. He is trying to piece together his new life dealing with the effects of his stroke, and knowing he will never be able to work again. In May of 2018, Joel decided he wanted to give back to the community and began volunteering in the KSM Food Market warehouse. This role gives him a sense of purpose and community belonging, rather than isolated in his apartment. Joel was soon found in the food market daily, spending hours upon hours receiving donations, stocking shelves and ensuring enough food is available for all clients. Joel, despite the effects from his stroke, is truly a remarkable and selfless person. He has found a sense of purpose and pride and wants to share his story. Joel is a permanent fixture at KSM and he leads by example. Submitting his nomination is an honour and we cannot say enough good things about his journey of overcoming his disabilities to find purpose in life again.
**Deb and Don Jackson**  
*Nominated by Lesley Anderson*

Deb and Don Jackson have been decorating their home at Christmas time in an impressive way for eight years. They demonstrate community spirit by gathering friends to help them set up their house, kicking off the decorating on Thanksgiving weekend. First Deb cooks a delicious meal for all the volunteers, and then decorating of the home begins. Their house lights up December 1 and draws attention from people from Oakville and beyond. Every year, the Jackson’s add more lights and more decorations. They even have music linked up through a radio station that goes to the beat of the lights changing. Families make the Jackson house a destination to get themselves into the Christmas spirit. In addition to their yearly Christmas display, Deb donates a lot of time to other charities such as Friends of We Care and World Accord.

**Patrick Lee and Judith Elaine Hung**  
*Nominated by Erin Fischer*

Judith and Patrick run a hugely successful parent-run group called Project Autism. The amazing part of this group is that it welcomes more than kids with autism, but every child, youth and adult with a disability is welcome. They have offered more than 700 programs for free to parents, without a dollar of support from registering as a not-for-profit organization. Why? To stay pure to the mission of helping the community and being community-based.
The couple’s efforts are tireless. In addition to running the program, they also manage many calls a week from parents who have received new diagnoses. They spend mornings, nights and weekends without pay or credit, to support this community. Their passion, drive, and never give up attitude is beyond impressive. It’s an honour to know them, and an honour to serve and help the community with them.

Lisa Mazzocato
Nominated by Ally Cooper

Lisa is a socially-conscious, goal-oriented, caring member of the Oakville community. In addition to volunteering with Skate Oakville and the Oakville Rangers Hockey Club for several years, Lisa has made a significant contribution to Hockey Cares by giving her time, excellent planning and organizational skills, positive attitude, contagious energy, and leadership. For the past three years, she has been an integral part of Hockey Cares, a project led by True North Aid, bringing youth from Oakville and the First Nations community of Attawapiskat together through an annual exchange program. The project unites these youth through playing hockey together, and giving them the opportunity to learn from one another by sharing life experiences. Lisa jumped into the Hockey Cares project because of her strong interest and passion in reconciliation efforts. She goes above and beyond in all that she does, planning and executing many successful events and fundraisers to support Hockey Cares. Her involvement has helped foster important connections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth and families in support of reconciliation efforts.
Amy McKenzie  
*Nominate by Shann McGrail*

Oakville Improv Theatre Company (OITC) is more than entertainment, it is a community. The driving force behind this organization of friends, family, students, volunteers, teachers and community partners is Amy. She has worked tirelessly to build awareness, gain support from town arts groups and local businesses, and engage Oakville residents. OITC was established to promote improvisation as an art form and provide high quality improvisation performances for the Oakville community. Amy’s work to develop OITC into a regular educational and entertainment entity is unique, as there are no other theatres in Halton that use improvisational theatre as an artistic practice. With Amy’s vision, OITC’s volunteer leadership team organizes regular training and workshop opportunities for the community, and has built a strong team of 33 local volunteer performers who entertain audiences through three key programs: a weekly evening drop-in workshop and show at Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre (QEPCCC); monthly family-oriented TheatreSportsTM shows at QEPCCC and monthly shows at the Moonshine Café. Amy has put Oakville’s improv scene on the world stage by collaborating with neighbouring communities, bringing talented professionals in from Toronto to further educate in this art form, and sending students to participate in Canadian and international festivals.
Jennifer Monte  
**Nominated by Carrie Baillie**

Jennifer is the Program Coordinator for the Breakfast Cart and Snack Bin programs at St. Bernadette Catholic Elementary School in Oakville. She has gone above and beyond to provide students with access to healthy food each and every day. She has also been the Chair of the Parent Council for eight years. In partnership with Halton Food For Thought, Jennifer started the Snack Bin program six years ago and has been instrumental in leading the program to the success it is today. In addition to the Snack Bin program, Jennifer also started the Breakfast Cart program, feeding over 150 students a healthy breakfast on a daily basis! Jennifer’s community support also includes volunteering with the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, St. Matthews Parish, where she serves as President. The group acts as an outreach program to neighbours in need within the community. Finally, Jennifer sits on various community roundtables to discuss issues related to poverty in the community, and helps connect families and individuals to key resources. Jennifer’s dedication to Oakville and desire to help others makes her a true role model and great example of the amazing things that can be achieved to enhance the quality of life for all community members.

Tanya Moschella  
**Nominated by Sue Scott**

Tanya moved to Gladacres Lane in Oakville 10 years ago and within a few short weeks, she managed to reach out to all the families on the street to set up a Gift of Giving initiative through
the musical voices of the children. She formed the Angelic Gladacres Carollers and each year she opens up her home to all children on the street to lead rehearsals for Christmas music performances. With Tanya’s help, the carollers bring the spirit of the holidays to all homes on the street, singing Christmas music on 72 doorsteps. As the carollers entertain, Tanya collects the generous donations of canned goods given by neighbours, which she sorts and delivers to the Kerr Street Mission. Her mandate to give to those in need has touched the hearts of many families and has taught the children the true meaning of giving at Christmas. Beyond Gladacres Lane, she organizes an annual Christmas Market at a local area school, raising funds for the Giving Tree, along with volunteering at various school functions throughout the year. She uses music as a source of joy and unity that fosters community collaboration and inclusiveness.

Andrew Needham
Nominated by Kimberley Clark

Andrew became a Victim Services volunteer in 2016, after completing the intense, mandatory 70-hour training program. Since that time, he has been an invaluable member of the team, embracing every opportunity to expand his level of awareness and knowledge to support the community. He makes himself available 24/7 to provide immediate on-scene crisis intervention and offers emotional and practical support to help individuals and families affected by tragedy and violence. While Andrew volunteers all over the region of Halton, dedicating over 1,450 volunteer hours in just one year, the bulk of his work supports
the Oakville community. His gentle and kind-hearted demeanor provides a beacon of hope for those that have lost their way or had their lives turned upside down. In addition to on-scene crisis support, Andrew also assists with representing the Victim Services Unit at community events to raise awareness for this critical 24-hour service. When the Project Lifesaver Program was launched (a radio frequency signaling device that aids in the search and rescue of lost persons who suffer from a diminished capacity or inability to communicate) Andrew was the first person to volunteer, wanting to help ensure that the program was a successful.

**Sharon Richardson**
*Nominated by Sara Cumming*

Sharon is one of the hardest working members of the Home Suite Hope (HSH) team. She has given countless hours of labour to support the community simply because she is so passionate about helping to improve the lives of others. Sharon is a volunteer coordinator extraordinaire, bringing together diverse people to ensure that all aspects of programming and fundraising are handled with ease. She has played a pivotal role in the success of annual fundraisers to ensure necessary support is available to run programs each year. In addition, Sharon organizes various committees to ensure that HSH’s donated Blueberry Fields Garden is harvested so families have access to fresh fruits and vegetables. For the past six years, Sharon has provided families with homemade meals and worked tirelessly to support the “Hope for the Holidays” campaign, and has been an outspoken advocate for increasing
community support. Sharon has also long provided meals for community members in need through St. Jude’s food ministries. Sharon has also volunteered her time as a mentor to staff, connecting them to valuable community resources.

**Ron Salem**  
*Nominated by Michael Salem*

Ron and his wife moved to Oakville in 1972. Despite having jobs that took him all over the GTA, he dove into volunteering in Oakville. He became involved with the local Bronte Scout Troop as a leader, guiding young men in their pursuit of badges and teaching wilderness survival techniques, while providing mentorship on developing important life skills. Ron also joined the Knights of Columbus, became president of the Columbus Association, and was a reader at St. Dominic’s Church. In 1986, Ron and his wife moved to Glen Abbey and helped establish the new St. Matthew’s Church. They took on the volunteer role of scheduling and managing readers, and assisting with the newly established church operations. When one of his sons developed an interest in soccer, Ron decided to become a coach with the Oakville Soccer Club for seven years. Throughout this time, he was appointed to serve on the Oakville Chamber of Commerce, where he spent many years as the treasurer. In the last number of years, Ron has become involved with the Rotary Club of Oakville Trafalgar, taking on the Oakville Ribfest as one of his favourite projects in addition to hosting Rotary exchange students into his home. For Ron, it has always been important for him to give back and offer support to the community.
J. David Spearns
Nominated by Melinda Ferlin-Tiller

Established in 2008, the Elder Technology Assistance Group (ETAG) is dedicated to enabling older adults to become active users of modern technology in their daily lives. ETAG has a large number of volunteers supporting their vision to foster a world without a digital divide between generations. J. David Spearns, is ETAG’s longest standing volunteer and has been a large part of the charity’s success since 2012. The majority of volunteers are younger in age—some would say those that understand the technical language easier; however, ETAG has a roster filled with volunteers that are similar in age (and sometimes older) than those participating in the programs (aged 55+).

David goes above and beyond his volunteer efforts. He is patient, a key attribute when teaching technology to older adults. He takes it upon himself to ensure everyone in the program is treated equally and has solutions to their technical issues. When participant numbers are low, he takes the time to educate his fellow volunteers on new technology topics and provides tips and guidance on how they can effectively share their tech knowledge. David is constantly spreading the word about technology tips/tricks, new scams and frauds, whether in person or online through his mass distribution emails that reach many on a daily basis.
Mark Steiman  
_Nominated by Rabbi Stephen Wise_

Mark loves Oakville and has dedicated his professional and volunteer time to the community. As a real estate advisor, he knows the town extremely well, developing positive relationships with owners, renters, buyers, sellers, tradespeople and more for decades. But his true community spirit is evident in volunteering for causes. Mark has been instrumental in efforts to save Glen Abbey and other causes to keep Oakville green and clean. He works tirelessly with Greening Sacred Spaces and Faith in the Common Good to make the buildings more environmentally-friendly. But perhaps his biggest impact is as president of Shaarei-Beth El Synagogue. He has been a member for decades, volunteering on various committees, especially as his daughters were involved in the education programs. For the past three years he has increased his efforts to raise the profile of the synagogue in the community, while bringing forward fresh ideas and a renewed enthusiasm to transform the Board of Directors. Additionally he has created surveys in order to gather important feedback from congregants on enhancing learning and worship opportunities at the synagogue.

Vivien Szatan  
_Nominated by Katherine Hamilton_

Described as a devoted leader and mentor, Vivien has been a volunteer choir manager for the Oakville Choir for Children and Youth for six years. This key volunteer position with the choir includes meeting twice a week for rehearsals for several
hours. Vivien is there before and after rehearsals helping with set up, clean up, and assisting the conductors through general choir management. This includes not only being the main contact for approximately 100 family members who need ongoing information communicated to them, but also giving additional time to join choir tours throughout the summer. She also attends all weekend and evening activities, which include singing performances, festivals, workshops, recording events, and more.

★ Senior Award ★

Recognizes a senior individual or group (65 years and older) that has made an outstanding voluntary contribution to the Oakville community.

Janet Bedford
Nominated posthumously by Jeannie Bugiardini

On February 27, 2019, Oakville lost a shining community champion. Janet Bedford was an active volunteer in Oakville and Bronte for more than 25 years. She has supported and volunteered for countless community events including Canada Day, Bronte Christmas Tree Lighting, Oakville Santa Claus Parade, Salmon Run, Polar Bear Dip, Remembrance Day, small
business awards, Blakelock High School events, and the list goes on. She was a volunteer for the Bronte BIA, Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Club, May Court, and volunteer photographer for snapd and Oakvillenews.org. Her two biggest contributions were connecting people in the community and photographing and recording events. Janet lit up a room, not just with the flash of her camera, but with her smile and warmth. She knew everyone and loved each community member and would go out of her way to meet people at each event. She had a knack for getting people together and she would often connect people to businesses, groups or agencies with a “tell them I sent you,” because that meant something. Janet was an abundance of energy. She was unstoppable. Her passion was her community and her people. Very few people in this world gave as selflessly as Janet did. She had so much love and is greatly missed.

**Judy Carr**

*Nominated by Amilia Azzopardi*

Judy shows so much care and support to the seniors at Churchill Place Retirement Residence. She always makes residents feel important with simple acts of kindness, making homemade desserts and taking the time to sit and chat with them. Judy makes special trips on Sundays to visit residents who do not have regular visits from family members or friends. Judy always makes sure the residents have fresh bouquets of flowers and works hard to ensure the courtyard is well-maintained, acts of service that are greatly appreciated. Judy is a big part of Churchill Place’s extended family. She is warm, kind and reliable and is a volunteer anyone would be lucky to have.
Carole Osborn  
_Nominated by Jennifer Naismith_

Community spirit means forging a path to make the community stronger and better for everyone. Leading by example, Carole does this each week at the Barkin’ Bin Thrift Shop. Carole gives so much for this cause and her never-ending service demonstrates her great love of animals and dedication to this Oakville and Milton Humane Society volunteer-run charity. The shop is 100 per cent volunteer-staffed, thanks to a wonderful group of people. As the lead volunteer, Carole manages the shop like she owns it. She makes it a comfortable and welcoming space for people to shop in and is always thinking of ways to improve it. She takes extra shifts, trains new volunteers and comes up with new ideas to grow the business. She helps manage a monthly fundraising auction and has put a new focus on selling larger donation items. Carole’s extraordinary work ethic and dedication, together with the joy she brings to her volunteer efforts, inspires others to do more and give back to the community.

Penny Smith  
_Nominated by Kim McDonald & Colleen Beswick_

Penny has been active in the Oakville Seniors Centre on Kerr Street (now the Trafalgar Park Older Adults Centre) for many years. Penny volunteers in the bistro and helps coordinate the weekly Friendship Luncheon. With the move into a new centre, Penny played a substantial role in expanding the bistro services. She has been a team leader in the kitchen, helping to train
everyone on the new baking procedures. Penny goes above and beyond, spending many hours planning activities for Friendship Luncheon clients, decorating for holidays, and shopping to keep the kitchen well-stocked. Penny is always there to help others and make their day outstanding. Penny’s dedication and her warm, welcoming, kind and hilarious demeanor is one of the reasons members and the staff at Trafalgar Park love her. The centre certainly could not operate and serve the seniors without her help.

Louise Yanick
Nominated by Paula Edwards

Known for her helpful and practical manner, Louise has been volunteering at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital (OTMH) and the Society of Saint Vincent De Paul (SSVP) for over 12 years. Even while working and raising her family, Louise understood the importance of giving back to her community and she encouraged her colleagues to join her in local events such as the Cure for Cancer and other local fundraisers. When she retired, Louise committed to dedicating many hours a week to the hospital, SSVP and her neighbourhood. Each month, Louise orders, organizes and leads the distribution of fresh food boxes for over 120 families in conjunction with the Halton Fresh Food Box Program. This program provides fresh food to families in need in the Oakville community. In addition, Louise regularly visits families in their homes as a volunteer with SSVP. She assists families, individuals, seniors and children, advocating for them and informing them about local services, in addition to spending time with them personally. Louise’s friendly and
approachable manner also make her a reliable and dedicated volunteer at OTMH. She considers volunteering a privilege, and brings enthusiasm, love and compassion to what she does in service to the community.

★ Youth Award ★

Recognizes a youth individual or group (18 years and under) that has made positive contributions towards enriching Oakville’s quality of life.

Tony Cao  
*Nominated by Terence P. Wild*

Tony came to Canada from China in 2006 and is now a Canadian citizen and a very proud resident of Oakville. He is involved in his community, where he has established himself as a willing volunteer, an accomplished scholar, an engaged athlete, an experienced leader, and an accredited musician. Tony has volunteered with MedLife internationally. Most recently, he traveled to Peru, where he taught dental hygiene to impoverished children. Tony’s example has inspired other students at his school to enroll in similar efforts to reach out and support upon those who are less fortunate. Tony has volunteered many hours at the Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, helping
transport patients to their scheduled dialysis appointments. He is reliable and conducts himself in a professional and mature manner. Tony is also a stellar student—his grades, leadership, and achievements are unparalleled! Tony won the silver medal in the 2019 Oakville Optimists’ Essay competition and is the captain of his school’s badminton team. It is Tony’s willing example that makes him a deserving recipient of the Oakville Youth Award. He is proud of his community and his efforts inspire others to follow the path of excellence he has pioneered.

**Youssef Gendy**  
*Nominated by Ragi Zaky*

At the age of 10, Youssef began offering landscaping services to help seniors and busy couples maintain their yards. At St. Peter and St. Paul Coptic Orthodox Church, he’s been volunteering for more than four years to help with annual events, summer camps for kids and children’s weekly services. Propelling his leadership skills, he succeeded in a rigorous election and is now a youth board representative, who is involved in the future direction of the youth at church. Youssef is a member of the Oakville Youth Action Committee, where youth regularly gather at Town Hall to plan the future for his peers and be their voice. For the past two years, Youssef has been a volunteer with Food for Life, the largest food recovery program in Halton Region. He is also a welcome team volunteer at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, warmly directing patients to where they need to get to in the hospital. At school, Youssef is an active member of numerous clubs and teams, helps operate the school store and tutors fellow
students through the License to Learn Tutoring Program. Youssef has positively impacted the community, fulfilling his dream of making a difference in the lives of others.

Sarah Yasini  
_Nominated by Monira Yasini_

Sarah has supported the Oakville community in so many outstanding ways. She volunteers at White Oaks library every day during her lunch break and after school, and has completed over 60 hours of community service work. When she volunteers, she decorates the library, helps people with technology, and assists children with disabilities. She also volunteers at ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development, where she helps individuals with autism in the drama program. At the age of 15, she wrote a book called _Autism: from a Siblings and Parents Perspective_, which she self-published. She was invited to do a presentation to students regarding her book and discussed how to become an author. Some of her classmates were inspired to write their own book. The money raised from the sale of the book, which was over $100, was donated to an autism centre in Oakville.

Oakville Symphony Youth Orchestra  
_Nominated by Lisa Kohler_

The Oakville Symphony Youth Orchestra (OSYO) has been a cornerstone of Oakville’s arts community for over 40 years. Founded in 1977 with just 27 members, the organization has expanded to include four divisions of orchestras, with 149
musicians ages six to 18. The OSYO embodies community spirit, not only through the music it creates and shares, but also through the connections it fosters between musicians of all ages. Together, the four orchestras perform at three major concerts annually, in addition to a number of smaller community outreach performances. With a mandate to ignite, encourage and enrich a love of music among its young membership, the OSYO is a runaway success. Within the organization’s culture, older students regularly help out with the younger ones. They lead by example, sharing procedural norms, music techniques and important guidelines around musician etiquette. This knowledge-sharing helps to build both confidence and community. This year, OSYO musicians took part in the Oakville Santa Claus Parade, and performed at community events as part of Oakville Symphony Day and the Young People’s Concert. Overseen by a diverse, volunteer board of directors, OSYO has consistently given back to the town, participating in many community events over the years.
Acknowledgments

About Chris Mei, emcee

Chris Mei is the National Afternoon/Evening host at “The Weather Network”. You can catch him Monday through Friday during the afternoon hours. But don’t forget that you can also catch him on CBC News Network between 2 and 5 p.m. (EAST) with the National Outlook.

Chris’ extensive performing credits include public speaking, stage, screen, television, movies, comedy, commercials, music and radio. Chris always brings a great deal of levity to any event he hosts and he will always thank his time studying at “The Second City Comedy Improv School” in Toronto, as well as the time he spent writing for and performing with his own comedy troupe.

Staying true to his roots and his love for the arts, and in particular theatre and dance, Chris continues to masterfully lead entertaining and insightful post-show “Artist Chat” sessions with the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts at the Paradiso Wine Bar throughout the regular theatre season.

“This year I hear that we have a new record set for nominees! That is not just a testament to those who work as hard as they do for others; it is a huge nod to you who thought enough to want to see that they are recognized for their selfless efforts over this past year!”
About Aiden Lee, artist

Aiden Lee is a 15-year-old abstract artist, advocate and awareness magnet, living with autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and anxiety. He utilizes different styles and mediums to create bright and bold abstracts that inspire the mind to run free with imagination; encouraging everyone to see from his side of the spectrum. Aiden combines the use of natural elements like fire, air, and water to manipulate materials and especially enjoys creating his own inks, encaustic wax, and mediums to manifest his work.

Originally used as a way for him to communicate, his art has evolved into expression and advocacy for others. Since 2017, Aiden has dedicated his time to bring art to students all over Ontario through his “Art from the Heart” initiative. He believes that the power of colour, design, shape, and texture can be used to bridge the gaps in acceptance, ability, and communication. For his efforts, Aiden received the 2019 HDSB Inspire Award and the 2017 YMCA Peace medal award for his work in the community and is proud to say that to date he has brought the wonderful world of art to over 1,600 students in Ontario.
The Town of Oakville would like to express its sincere thanks to the awards sponsors for their support of the Community Spirit Awards.