

Betty Ward is Caledon's Community Champion



Betty Ward was named Caledon's 2016 Community Champion Monday night.



Mayor Allan Thompson, accompanied by Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones, presented the Pan Am Gold Medal Volunteer Award to Lorraine Bayliss.



Carine Strong's service to such agencies as Caledon Community Services, United Way of Peel Region, the Ontario Volunteer Centre Network, etc. resulted in her receiving Distinguished Citizen recognition. She was congratulated by Councillors Johanna Downey, Doug Beffort and Barb Shaughnessy.

By Bill Rea

Caledon East area resident has been volunteering for many years, and for many causes.

That has been recognized in Caledon as she was named Community Champion of 2016.

The announcement was made Monday night at the Town's 2016 Community Recognition Night.

Ward said she found out about the honour about a week before, admitting she was "very surprised" at the news.

"I felt very honoured, but I'm sure there are many, many other people who deserve it," she added.

In accepting the award, she thanked the three people who nominated her; Fay McCrea, Joanne Davis and Anne Allengame, as well as her family for supporting her in all her activities.

"I did it because I loved the community," she said.

"Nothing fazes Betty, and nothing is ever too much work for her," observed Constable Brenda Evans, peer support officer with Caledon OPP who was also MC for the evening. "She tackles any and every task that needs attention."

Evans also pointed out Ward only took a couple of weeks away from her community work last year when her husband Ginger passed away.

The groups she has contributed to have included Caledon East United Church for almost 60 years, and has included involvement in Explorers on Wednesday nights, being a Sunday school superintendent for 13 years, being a founding member of the United Church Women's group and the first president, and she helped get the 40th Anniversary Award program started in conjunction with Emmanuel College.

In addition, Ward has been involved with the Caledon East Historical Society, doing research and interviews for a chapter entitled Schools of Our Past for the book Settling the Hills. She taught at Caledon East Public School from 1955 until 1970, and continued to take part organizing reunions after her retirement, as well as tutoring many students.

As well, Ward has made contributions to organizations like Heritage Caledon, Meals on Wheels, Caledon Community Services, and has been an advocate for local youth and showcasing their talents by submitting their names for scholarships and awards.

Also receiving recognition Monday night was Lorraine Bayliss as Pan Am Gold Medal Volunteer.

In making the presentation, Heather Savage, manager of recreation for the Town, observed she made a significant contribution to the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games, specifically in Caledon.

"She was our Pan Am Torch Relay liaison, and helped organize six mini-celebration sites on the torch's way to the Caledon Day stage," Savage said. "She was also a member of the Pan Am One Year Countdown Event Committee and volunteered with TO2015."

Savage praised Bayliss's attention to detail and her ability to bring the community together with hard work and her positive attitude.

"Tonight, we celebrate the Town and we celebrate you," Mayor Allan Thompson told the recipients.

He also stressed that Caledon is best known for its people.

"Caledon residents care," he said. "They always have."

"Tonight, we honour the people who walk the talk," he added.

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones commented she made a statement in the Legislature at Queen's Park last week in honour of National Volunteer Week.

She pointed out in her statement that in 2007, nearly half of all Canadians volunteered.

"People volunteer their time to an organization because they want to support their community," she said. "They want to give back."

Jones also pointed out there are health benefits to volunteering. She cited a study in the American Journal of Public Health that found individuals who volunteer are better protected against stress.

"Use that in your next recruiting campaign," she suggested.

People were recognized in various categories.

In Community and Social Service, those recognized included Robert Wiggins, Gabe Thompson, Inglewood Garden Club, Mary Matson, Neil Boyes, Adriana Roche, Meredith Taylor, George Ledson, Barb Imrie, Pam Stratton, Stan Dacres, Gordon Croft, Brian Cleave and Monique Kurnath.

In Sports and Recreation, the recipients were Jason Scorcia, Luis Lopez, Terry Lawrence and Dave Vanstone.

Recognized in the Arts and Culture category was Maureen Schoonbaert.

Noted for Sports Achievement were Mikaela Dodig, the Caledon Cougars Basketball U15 Girls team and Ashley Lawrence.

Those receiving recognition as Distinguished Citizens were Dave Eccleston, Marguerite Jones, Ian Sinclair, Rosemary Gauvin, Marion Standish, Ted Webb, Carine Strong and Stephen Benson.

Also taking part in the evening were Piper David Borrett of the Sandhill Pipes and Drums, the Caledon Fire and Emergency Services Honour Guard, Town Crier Andrew Welch, the Robert F. Hall Catholic Secondary School Jazz Band, Caledon Fair Junior Ambassador Tucker Hardy and Peel-Dufferin Queen of the Furrow Natalie Vink.