

Mayor Sendzik's state of the city celebrates 'everyday heroes' throughout ongoing COVID-19 pandemic recovery

March 11, 2021 – We live in a community of heroes.

That was the message from Mayor Walter Sendzik as he delivered his seventh annual state of the city address today. So much of the community has played a key role in supporting the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic recovery: nurses, physicians and medical support staff; emergency responders; those thrust into essential worker roles, including grocery store employees, food manufacturers and City workers; teachers who have found new ways to teach; and all those caring for their ailing loved ones and families.

“Heroes come in all shapes and sizes, and the way we've seen our community step up and respond during the COVID-19 health crisis is just another shining example of how incredible the City of St. Catharines is,” said Mayor Sendzik, who made the address virtually from the stage of the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre for the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce event.

While reflecting on the contributions of the City and community, and how they've become heroes of the recovery effort, Mayor Sendzik also highlighted a pair of youth for the heroic efforts that saved their dad. When Jeff Vanyo suffered a massive heart attack on Dec. 17, his son Oliver and daughter Aubrey stepped up to help save their father. Thanks to their efforts, the Vanyo family celebrated a holiday miracle a week later when Jeff was discharged and was able to enjoy Christmas with his children and wife April.

“Oliver and Aubrey - much like so other many people in our community in the past year - are real heroes,” said Mayor Sendzik. “This past year has been defined by everyday heroes, doing what they can to help those in the community – help their family, their loved ones, their friends, the businesses down the street struggling to stay open, the people who had to work long hours. We're a community of heroes.”

Mayor Sendzik also applauded the efforts of the resilient business community in St. Catharines amidst the pandemic. From investments at major manufacturers like General Motors, to new businesses choosing to open their doors during the health crisis, the mayor highlighted some of the beacons of light that shone during the challenging year.

 /MayorSendzik

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Together with the St. Catharines economic development team, Mayor Sendzik inducted five businesses into the Team STC Hall of Fame for their contributions in the community and abroad. A Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Schenck Farms and Greenhouses – a long-standing family business that has flourished in the Garden City since 1891. Also recognized as 2021 Team STC award recipients were: Legacy Award recipients, CanAmerican Stone Spreader and 13th Street Winery, and Future Leaders Award recipients, OddBird and Heddle Shipyards.

“This year’s Team STC awards represent not only shining examples of successful businesses that we are proud to celebrate for their investments and contributions to our community, but also businesses that have been resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Brian York, director of economic development and government relations. “While the pandemic has forced businesses to rethink how they operate, this year’s class of Team STC recipients have been innovative and will keep our City’s momentum going as we continue with recovery.”

Mayor Sendzik also thanked the community for its efforts to follow directives throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and highlighted the hard work and tireless efforts of the staff at the City of St. Catharines for its response. He also thanked CAO Shelley Chemnitz for her unwavering and steady leadership.

“Shelley has announced she is retiring in a few months and I want to acknowledge her work,” said Mayor Sendzik. “She has done an outstanding job guiding our City staff – both in good times and through the last year.”

He ended his address with an optimistic view that the City will return to the momentum it experienced ahead of the pandemic, with Niagara ready to stage the Canada Summer Games, and the City ready to welcome back the experiences it has missed through the pandemic.

“St. Catharines will be soaring again. That’s my promise to you,” said Mayor Sendzik.

The event was broadcast live on YourTV and will be rebroadcast throughout March. The stream will also be posted to be viewed on www.mayorsendzik.ca.

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