

City recognizes impact of volunteers on community

April 23, 2021 — Even as we remain apart there are those in the community who continue to bring people together, strengthening the community ties that are more important than ever.

One need look no further than Jeffrey Lennox, who is being recognized as the Margaret and Robin MacLennan Youth Volunteer of the Year as the City of St. Catharines marks National Volunteer Week.

The Margaret and Robin MacLennan Youth Volunteer of the Year award is presented to the youth individual who has displayed and demonstrated the principles and actions that help to create a healthier and more connected community. Lennox has done just that throughout the course of the pandemic, stepping up to help the Yaguars Sport and Social Club bring youth together even as they remain physically apart.

With elementary school children at home during lockdowns Lennox created online programs for the club, engaging elementary school children in science, technology, engineering and math learning in a virtual environment. He has motivated youth to explore new pathways in life through his creative leadership, and has acted as an ambassador to newcomer Canadian youth.

Recently he has helped the Yaguars connect with high school members, creating an online space for teens to relax, chat and share ideas while learning about mental health, finance, and internet safety.

Lennox isn't alone in being recognized, as the City marks Volunteer Week with its annual volunteer recognition efforts, moving them online as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic prevents in-person gatherings. Community, Recreation and Culture Services staff spent multiple days this week dropping awards and certificates off curbside at recipients' homes.

Len Bates has been recognized as the 2021 Mayor's Volunteer of the Year for his extensive work in bringing the community together. The Mayor's Volunteer of the Year award is presented to the individual who represents volunteerism at its finest level.

As a long-time member of the Kiwanis Club of St. Catharines, Bates has continually demonstrated his commitment to serving the community as an everyday hero. He has helped raise countless sums of money through his work organizing the club's annual duck race in Port Dalhousie.

He has stepped up over the years to serve at one time as the president of the Kiwanis Board of Directors and as an active board member for the Kiwanis Seniors Complex. He has always used his local connections to better his community, including fundraising efforts and building support for saving Lock One in Port Dalhousie, protecting the heritage of his community while enhancing culture through the creation of a community hub and performing arts space.

“Throughout the pandemic, we’ve continued to see how important volunteers are, assisting some of our most vulnerable residents and supporting our community partners as they pivoted and carried on valuable efforts. They will continue to play a significant role in our recovery efforts,” said Mayor Walter Sendzik. “Thank you to all of the volunteers who have supported our community in many different ways. I want to also extend special congratulations to Len Bates and Jeffrey Lennox. They are true role models who serve as inspiration for everyone in our community.”

Bates and Lennox aren’t alone in being recognized with dozens of individuals receiving Volunteer and MyHoodSTC Awards from the City this week. A complete list of recipients and a video message from Mayor Walter Sendzik can be found at stcatharines.ca/Volunteers2021.

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