

## Community heroes celebrated with 2020 Volunteer Recognition Awards

**May 13, 2020** — Even at a distance the City's volunteer heroes loom large in the community.

Every spring, with the annual Volunteer Recognition Awards, the City celebrates its real-life heroes who graciously donate their time and talents to make the community a better place to live, play, learn and grow. This year that annual tradition continues even if what is typically a gala affair has been scaled back to limit the spread of COVID-19. This week the City announced its list of those being recognized, with dozens of individuals receiving certificates of recognition via mail, alongside the winners of the Mayor's Volunteer of the Year Award and the Margaret and Robin MacLennan Youth Volunteer of the Year Award.

"Our residents give so much of themselves - their time, talent and treasures - to make our City the vibrant, compassionate place it is," said Mayor Walter Sendzik. "All of these volunteers should be celebrated for their commitment to supporting our community in so many different ways. I also want to send special congratulations to the Mayor's Volunteer of the Year Award recipient Jess Boulay, and the recipient of the Margaret and Robin MacLennan Youth Volunteer of the Year Award Sara Mateus-Jimenez, who are role models and should serve as a true inspiration for everyone in our community."

The Margaret and Robin MacLennan Youth Volunteer of the Year award is presented to the youth individual who has displayed and demonstrated the principals and actions that help to create a healthier and more connected community while the Mayor's Volunteer of the Year award is presented to the individual who represents volunteerism at its finest level.

Boulay stepped up to help struggling women and their families as co-coordinator for the St. Catharines Shoebox Project, committing countless hours of marketing, fundraising, gathering of donations, organizational efforts, and delivering shoeboxes in support of the Project. The Shoebox Project for Women collects and distributes gift-filled Shoeboxes to women impacted by homelessness in communities across Canada. In 2019 a total of 1,093 boxes were assembled and donated in St. Catharines thanks to the tireless efforts of Boulay

Mateus-Jimenez is a true volunteer leader with the Yaguars Sports and Social Club. She has helped the club create inclusive space for children who are new to Canada, founding the club's robotics class, raising funds herself to launch the program.

“This year’s theme was ‘real heroes don’t wear capes’ and the recipients demonstrate this in the giving of their time and efforts, they are the true heroes of our community,” said Community and Events Supervisor Brianne Wilson. “We only wish we could celebrate all their achievements in person, and, while we can’t do that we certainly want them to get their due.”

As part of this year’s recognition Sendzik recorded a thank-you videos for volunteers ahead of them receiving their awards via mail. The videos, and full list of recipients and their accomplishments, can be found at [www.stcatharines.ca/Volunteers2020](http://www.stcatharines.ca/Volunteers2020).

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