

Township of
Langley



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NEWS RELEASE

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NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR DESERVING VOLUNTEERS

Kirsten Charlesworth began volunteering when she was on maternity leave as a way of keeping up her skills, meeting new people, getting involved, and helping out in the community.

Over the past several years, the working mother of two has served on the Parents Advisory Council at her children's school, was on the Langley District PAC executive, and was instrumental in organizing and overseeing the installation of a new playground addition at RC Garnett Elementary. She was a volunteer coordinator for the Langley United Soccer Association, takes part in Clean Up Langley Day, and served on the Township of Langley's Recreation, Culture, and Parks Advisory Committee.

Charlesworth has helped organize the annual Langley Walk, has been involved in several high-profile sporting events such as the 2010 BC Summer Games and the 2014 BC Seniors Games, raises funds for the Canadian Cancer Society through the Relay for Life, and helps put on the annual Thank You for Caring Christmas Tea fundraiser for the Langley Christmas Bureau.

So many organizations and causes have benefited from her time and efforts, yet Charlesworth said she is the one who has gained from the experiences.

"I ended up with way more benefits from volunteering than I ever thought," she said. "Some of my closest friends are people I met while volunteering. I am always amazed at how you can completely disagree about politics, schools, etcetera, but can all get along and get an amazing amount accomplished when you volunteer."

"I have lived in Langley most of my life and I got to see parks and learn about programs I didn't know existed before I volunteered," she added. "I also got to learn how systems work, see seniors living an active life – the kind I want to live when I get there! – and see kids do amazing things that I never thought of doing when I was a teenager."

Last April, Charlesworth was recognized for everything she does when she was presented with the 2015 Eric Flowerdew Volunteer Award at the Township of Langley's Volunteer Appreciation Event.

The celebration is held each spring to commemorate the hundreds of people who dedicate their time, efforts, and talents to help others and give back to the community. During the event, the Flowerdew Award is given to an exceptional individual who enhances residents' quality of life, the John and Muriel Arnason Award is presented to a duo who work together to make a difference, and the top student is honoured with the Pete Swensson Outstanding Community Youth Award.

"I was really overwhelmed and quite frankly, still am, to have been nominated, let alone win the award," Charlesworth said, "especially when I volunteer with some really awesome people who deserve so much recognition."

The deadline to make nominations for this year's Awards is Friday, February 10, and Charlesworth hopes local residents will take a moment to nominate the dedicated volunteers they know, and give them the thanks and recognition they deserve.

The Arnason and Flowerdew recipients will also be presented with a \$750 cash prize as part of their Award, to be donated to the recognized charity or society of their choice.

"Our Volunteer Award winners have a huge impact on the community, and the annual cash award helps them make an even bigger difference," said Leeann Virtue, Community Recreation Manager for the Township. "There is a ripple effect, as that money can go a long way and be put to great use by organizations that help others."

Charlesworth split her monetary award between the Langley Christmas Bureau, the Langley United Soccer Association, which does a soccer boot exchange for kids who can't afford them and runs a LUSA Kicks Cancer fundraising soccer relay, and KidSport.

KidSport is a national not-for-profit organization that provides financial assistance to kids who want to participate in organized sports.

"Volunteering with soccer, it was really eye-opening how many families are able to get their kids involved in sport because of KidSport's assistance. It made a world of difference to the families that I know," Charlesworth said.

A \$750 scholarship is also presented to the Pete Swensson Outstanding Community Youth Award winner, to help further their educational pursuits.

Awards criteria, information, and nomination forms for the 2016 Eric Flowerdew and 2016 John and Muriel Arnason Awards can be found at tol.ca/awards. To nominate a Grade 11 or 12 student for the 2017 Pete Swensson Outstanding Community Youth Award, contact their school principal.

For more information, contact Sarah Morris, Special Events Coordinator, at 604.533.6148 or smorris@tol.ca.