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## Volunteer Recognition Program

### COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARDS

#### Purpose

The purpose of the Volunteer Recognition Program (Community Spirit Awards) is to acknowledge the individuals and community-based organizations whose volunteer efforts have contributed significantly to the quality of life in Middlesex Centre.

The awards seek to celebrate volunteers and others who have had a positive influence in Middlesex Centre through acts of kindness, activism, and community spirit. Some contributions are quiet acts of kindness on an ongoing basis while others contribute in higher profile endeavours; both are deserving of recognition.

The awards acknowledge the outstanding contribution of residents and community organizations to the overall quality of life in Middlesex Centre. The awards also serve to increase local understanding about the important role volunteers play in Middlesex Centre, and to raise awareness about volunteer opportunities.

The awards also afford an opportunity to recognize the contribution of Middlesex Centre community representatives serving on various agencies, boards and commissions (ABCs).

#### Procedure

#### Recognition Categories

Volunteers will be recognized in two general categories:

- 1) Individuals
  - Up to three individuals may be recognized per year.
  - Individuals may be of any age.
  - Individuals may be recognized posthumously.
- 2) Community Organizations, Groups and Businesses
  - Up to three community organizations, groups and businesses may be recognized per year.

- Groups do not have to be organized or ongoing (for example, they may be ad hoc community groups that are formed for a one-time event or in response to a specific community concern).
- Businesses may be recognized in this category for community contributions outside of their work that have no monetary reward.

Individuals and community organizations will be recognized for their contributions in one or more of the following categories. It may be that a recipient is not selected from each category in a given year, and there may be more than one recipient in a category in a given year.

- Arts, Culture and Heritage: Recognizing outstanding individuals or organizations who have made a significant voluntary contribution to the artistic and/or cultural community of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre through the development, support, conservation or promotion of local history and heritage, culture, music, visual, performing or literary arts.
- Environment and Climate Action: Recognizing outstanding individuals or organizations who have demonstrated environmental leadership by making significant voluntary contributions to the sustainability, protection, conservation, or beautification of Middlesex Centre's natural and built environments.
- Sports and Recreation: Recognizing outstanding individuals (including teams) or organizations who through their volunteer contributions have promoted sports, recreation, fitness, and healthy active living.
- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility: Recognizing outstanding individuals or organizations who have made significant voluntary contributions, beyond legislated requirements, to make Middlesex Centre a more inclusive community.
- Good Neighbour: Recognizing outstanding individuals or organizations who have made significant contributions in their neighbourhood by showing kindness, instilling community pride, or ensuring public safety to make Middlesex Centre a better place to live, work and play.
- Community Inspiration: Recognizing outstanding individuals or organizations who advocate for others, motivate the community, or have had an inspirational influence on others.
- Volunteerism & Citizenship: Recognizing outstanding individuals who have demonstrated extensive volunteerism over an extended period of time (more than ten years) in multiple areas of service to the community or service clubs in Middlesex Centre.

Nominee's contributions will be reviewed with respect to how they demonstrate one or more of the municipality's values (respect, cooperation, innovation, integrity), address

challenges and priorities of the Middlesex Centre community, and demonstrate the impact (positive benefit) they have in the community through their actions and activities.

## **Eligibility**

1. Individuals must be (or have been) a resident of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre, own a business in the municipality or attend school in the municipality. Individuals outside of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre may be considered if their contributions are focused within the municipality.
2. Community organizations and groups must be located and/or provide services in Middlesex Centre. If the organization/group raises funds, those funds are primarily put back into Middlesex Centre through projects or programs.
3. Businesses must be located and/or provide services in Middlesex Centre. Contributions from businesses must be related to their volunteer efforts and/or community contributions outside of their work that have no monetary reward.
4. Eligible individuals and community groups do not include:
  - those that espouse hatred, discrimination, violence, intolerance or racism;
  - those that are political or partisan in nature, including political parties or political organizations;
  - faith-based organizations, unless engaged in non-religious community service;
  - commercial entities (unless in support of community work with no commercial gain) or in celebration of corporate events; and/or
  - any group that is contrary to municipal policies or by-laws or other applicable laws and statutes.
5. Elected officials of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre are not eligible while serving in that capacity.
6. Paid staff (full-time, part-time or paid-on-call) are not eligible, except where their volunteerism is separate, distinct from, and outside of their paid position.
7. Services must be performed on a wholly volunteer basis and not for pay nor compensated with other tangible rewards.
8. Nominees may only receive one award in a five-year period.

## **Program Coordination**

The Manager of Strategic Communications will coordinate the volunteer recognition program. It is their role to ensure that the program is managed from the nomination and selection process through recognition. They are supported by the Office of the Clerk who

will ensure nomination information is collected in keeping with the municipality's privacy policies.

## **Nomination & Selection Process**

Nominations may come from members of the public, staff, and members of Council.

Nominations will be accepted throughout the year. The municipality will actively call for nominations between January 1 to March 1 each year. Nominations received prior to March 1 will be considered for recognition in that same year. Nominations received after March 1 will be considered in the following year.

Those wishing to nominate an individual or community organization must complete a brief nomination form (online, via email or via mail). Except in unusual circumstances, self-nomination is not permitted.

Nominations will be collected by the Office of the Clerk for consideration.

Following March 1, the Office of the Clerk will provide copies of all completed and eligible nominations to the selection panel for review.

The selection panel will comprise: the mayor or their delegate, one additional member of council, the CAO or their delegate, the Director of Community Services or their delegate, and one member of the public as selected through the municipal's normal process of public appointments. The selection panel is not considered a separate Advisory Committee of Council and is established only for the purpose of reviewing nominations received.

The selection panel will review nominations based on the following:

- Demonstrate one or more of the municipality's values (respect, cooperation, innovation, integrity).
- Address a challenge or priority in the Middlesex Centre community, as it relates to the award category.
- Provide specific examples that demonstrate how the person or organization has made a significant impact (positive benefit) in the community through their actions and activities.

The selection panel reserves the right to hold a nomination until the following year.

All decisions made by the selection panel are final.

The Office of the Clerk will notify selected award recipients after the selection process is complete and will ensure the nominees agree with sharing their name and information about their contributions prior to an official announcement being made.

## **Recognition**

Recognition of award recipients will include:

- an official announcement;
- an in-person awards ceremony aligned with the council meeting closest to National Volunteer Week (on or about the 20<sup>th</sup> of April);
- a personalized certificate and small award;
- recognition honouring the current recipients at local community centres, arenas, and other municipal facilities throughout the year; and
- permanent recognition honouring current and past award recipients on the municipal website.

## **Recognition of Middlesex Centre ABC Volunteers**

Volunteers representing Middlesex Centre on ABCs are not required to take any action with regard to this policy beyond their committee work. These volunteers will be recognized with the community volunteers in the final year of the term of service, typically aligning with the last year of a term of council. Recognition will include:

- an official announcement;
- an in-person awards ceremony aligned with the council meeting closest to National Volunteer Week (on or about the 20<sup>th</sup> of April);
- a personalized certificate and small award; and
- recognition honouring the current recipients at local community centres, arenas, and other municipal facilities. throughout the year.

## **Revoking a Community Spirit Award**

In very rare circumstances, Council may opt to remove an individual or community organization from the permanent list of award recipients due to legal or other concerns. If required, revoking a community spirit award will be done through normal council approval processes.

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every four years, corresponding to the first year following the election of a new council.