

Co-op Service Awards

Central Ontario Co-operative Housing Federation

Introduction

You will find in this booklet the nominees/recipients for the 2006 Co-op Service Awards. The award has been initiated by COCHF so that housing co-ops can give recognition to their members and staff who have made an outstanding or exemplary contribution to their co-op, the greater co-op movement, or the larger community.

Even though the award is being presented by COCHF, it is most important to note that these individuals have been nominated by their own housing co-op community. It is the co-op's way of giving appreciation for the valued contribution made by the nominee. COCHF recognizes that a housing co-op is a business that provides good and affordable housing to a diversified membership. However, a housing co-op is a community of individuals and families who support one another and work together to make their lives better. This is the value of a co-operative community.

Congratulations from COCHF to all of the nominees/recipients of the 2006 Co-op Service Awards. Thank you for letting us share your contribution with others.

2006 Recipients

Donna Adamson, Co-ordinator
Nominated by Drumlin Co-operative Homes, Brantford

Donna was secretly nominated for the support she provided to the co-op after a member was murdered earlier this year. Donna has worked for Drumlin for the past 15 years, working as Co-ordinator for the past 10 years. While most of Drumlin's members have always appreciated Donna's assistance and guidance, often turning to her for help during times of need, Donna went over and above her job requirements after the tragedy occurred. Donna was instrumental in ensuring that the co-op and its members received support services, as well as taking on the restoration of the unit involved. Donna also acted as liaison with the press, the police, co-op members and the general public. Says member, Tracy Lavelle, "Donna has always been a part of our co-op community, and she has always been there for Drumlin. She is always willing to take the time to sit and discuss things with members, and will make suggestions and work with them to try and get things straightened out. She's one hell of a lady!"

Mike Anderson, Board Director, Head of Clean-up Committee
Nominated by Cambridge New Hope Co-operative

Always cheerful, Mike is a relatively new member at Cambridge New Hope Co-op. Mike was "absolutely thrilled" to learn that housing co-operatives existed, and he has been an enthusiastic member since he joined about two years ago. Mike was nominated because he is a positive influence on the co-op. Community is very important to Mike, and he demonstrates this through his willingness to fill gaps in the co-op and in the greater community. Recently, the co-op has been left with a few damaged units after the members moved out, and Mike has cheerfully gone in and taken care of the mess.

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Sulin Beaton, President of Board, Volunteer Maintenance Co-ordinator
Nominated by Silver Wood Co-op, Guelph

A member of Silver Wood for six years, Sulin is described as a problem-solver, creative, committed, unselfish and diligent - with a strong work ethic and high level of energy! Sulin's active participation at Silver Wood through a variety of roles has helped the co-op through the difficult stages of recovering from its financial crisis, which came to light in 2000. Specifically, Sulin is credited with the reduction in vacancy losses from \$164,227 in 2004 to the expected loss of \$77,000 in 2006. Manager Irene Maxwell, said, "Sulin wanted to ensure that the co-op's best interests were always addressed." Silver Wood wishes to recognize Sulin's diligence and commitment, finding her an inspiration during difficult times.

Janet Brown, Co-ordinator at Sprucewoods Co-op, Kitchener
Nominated by Bread and Roses Co-operative Homes, Kitchener

Janet was "on loan" to Bread and Roses from Sprucewoods Co-op, coming to temporarily assist while the Bread and Roses' co-ordinator was on sick leave. The temporary situation ended up lasting for a year! The Board credits Janet with helping the Board and membership reclaim their co-op and turn it from a neglected living space which had low "co-op spirit" to the clean, well-tended, full-of-life co-op it is now.

Over the years Bread and Roses became run-down, and the co-op experienced problems with member participation. Janet is attributed with giving Bread and Roses members a voice, with facilitating the empowerment of the members, and with increasing member participation. Janet went above and beyond the call of duty, making herself available to Bread and Roses, even when she was not "on the clock." Janet is described as having a fantastic sense of humour, and the members very much appreciate her style of allowing people to learn from their mistakes. The Board extends a hearty thank you to Sprucewoods Co-op and to Janet's family for their patience. Without Janet and her wealth of knowledge, her determination, and her generosity of spirit, Bread and Roses says it would not be a vibrant, active and growing community.

Gail Close, Financial Administrator
Nominated by Windfield Co-operative Homes Inc., Guelph

Described as loyal, dependable, and reliable, Gail is appreciated for always going over and above the call of duty to ensure that Windfield functions as best as possible. Gail has been with Windfield for 15 years, acting as Co-ordinator and Financial Administrator for the past five years. The Board says "she always has the best interests of the co-op at heart." Gail is admired by co-op members and co-workers for her ability to plan into the future, and for her abilities to be prepared ahead of time. Gail always seems to be one step into the future, a testament to her capacity to plan ahead!

Betty Gottfried, Vice-President of the Board of Directors
Nominated by Beechwood Co-operative Homes Inc., Waterloo

An original member from 1994, Betty is currently the Vice-President of the Board of Directors. Betty is described as the heart and soul of Beechwood, and the success of the co-op is attributed in a large part to Betty. People look to Betty to lead - and she does not disappoint them! The secret seems to be that Betty treats Beechwood members as if they are a part of her family. Through all of the co-op's ups and downs, Betty has been the one constant leader in the community.

Darlene McCrone, Treasurer CSACO, Co-ordinator at Shamrock Co-operative Homes
Nominated by the Co-operative Staff Association of Central Ontario

Darlene was nominated by fellow staff members for her commitment to the association. A member since 1992, she has also been the treasurer for the past 10 years, and provides assistance on many committees. Described as “always following through on her commitments,” Darlene is also commended by her fellows for her great spirit, and because she is the person to count on when something needs to be done.

Nancy Nolan, Member, Maintenance & Community Development Committee
Nominated by Clarion Co-operative Homes, Cambridge

A member at Clarion for one year, Nancy is nominated for her involvement and commitment to her co-op. Nancy is the kind of person who gets things done, and that’s just what she did when the Co-ordinator was without an assistant and swamped in the office. Nancy just showed up and volunteered to take on a huge work load from Fran, such as filing, photocopying, and other non-confidential office tasks. Nancy is described as being a person who doesn’t expect anything in return.

Rosemary Plummer, Chairperson, Maintenance Committee
Nominated by Beaver Creek Co-operative, Waterloo

A member of Beaver Creek since 1992, Rosemary has been heading up the Maintenance Committee for the past nine plus years. Although retired, Rosemary puts in many hours into her role as Chairperson. She provides supervision for contracted staff, meets regularly with staff and members, monitors the maintenance budgets, and ensures that on-going maintenance tasks are looked after. Rosemary is credited with providing vision for the co-op through her help in shaping long-term maintenance plans, and also in keeping Beaver Creek attractive and cost-effective. Rosemary is described as being an integral member of the co-op, providing continuity and security.

Rennie O’Neill, Emergency Maintenance
Nominated by Highland Homes Co-operative, Cambridge

A member of Highland Homes Co-operative since 1992, Rennie was nominated by his Board of Directors for his outstanding commitment to volunteering in the community. Rennie is described as “always ready to lend a hand to any member who may ask for his help.” He not only voluntarily looks after cutting grass, he is always the first person to help out when there is a problem. Highland Homes appreciates how he demonstrates the co-operative principles by leading by example.

Neil Poworoznyk, Landscaping Committee Member
Nominated by Sprucewoods Housing Co-operative, Kitchener

A members of Sprucewoods for six years, Neil is cited for his unflagging participation in the co-op, having undertaken to look after grass-cutting and snow clearing for the co-op. “Neither rain, nor sleet, nor hail (nor snow, nor wind) would stop our Neil Poworoznyk from volunteering his time and effort to keep our co-op looking its best. He never has to be asked, he doesn’t complain, and he volunteers because he wants to, and because he wants our co-op to look nice.” The Board of Directors said “We have seen him clearing snow when the weather has been appalling. He returns to his unit covered in snow, face flushed, but always with a smile. He not only looks after common areas, he also looks after city property surrounding our co-op. This definitely enhances not only our co-op, but the surrounding neighbourhood, and has a positive effect on our larger community. Neil continues to make an outstanding and exemplary contribution to Sprucewoods and the surrounding community.”

Martina Rennenberg and Linda Ryan, Coffee Club Co-ordinators

Nominated by Shamrock Co-operative Homes, Waterloo

Linda is an original member (since 1990) and Martina has been a member since 2002. Aside from participating in the co-op in other ways (Linda is the Laundry Coin Collector, Martina is the President of the Board), both have been running the Coffee Club for approximately 4 years. Shamrock has nominated Martina and Linda for their contributions to community development in the co-op through the coffee club.

Linda and Martina host the coffee club every Wednesday morning, and approximately 20 members attend regularly to enjoy jokes, stories, to celebrate birthdays and all other occasions. Not only are they well-respected, they are always trying to recruit new people to come out and enjoy the fun! The Coffee Club is an ideal way to share information about the co-op, provide education - and to recruit people. Martina and Linda never shirk their assumed duties as Coffee Club hosts, putting in many hours of their time to prepare for each week.

Jason Spencer, Treasurer

Nominated by Brighton Yards Housing Co-operative, Waterloo

A member of Brighton Yards since 2000, Jason was nominated by his co-op board for his dedication to the co-op in his role as treasurer. A demanding job, the responsibilities were complicated when Brighton Yards (a federally funded co-op) renewed their mortgage and lost subsidy funding. Jason is described as being very faithful at his job, and his dedication enables the Co-ordinator, Wendy Relf, to do her job. Jason really supports the co-operative principles, and this is demonstrated through his ongoing commitment. In the past, he has sat on the COCHF Board, and chaired Brighton Yard's maintenance committee.

Florine White, Member

Nominated by Changemakers Co-operative Homes, Kitchener

A long-standing member, Florine was nominated by her co-op for her unflagging contributions and commitment to keeping the co-operative common areas such as the laundry room, elevator, entrance way, and hallway, clean. This is a task that Florine has taken on as a regular routine, performing her duties at least three times a week. Florine's efforts make it a pleasure to enter the building - and add to the marketability of the units. She is described as tireless and dedicated, never expecting anything in return for her work.

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